Gaming!

Jet Pilot Reviews Flight Sims

Games on the Web

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Inside The Neverhood

Plus: A Conversation with Jerzy Kucia and Piotr Dumala

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Cover: Original cover art created by Joseph Sanabria at The Neverhood exclusively for *Animation World Magazine.*

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

by Heather Kenyon

Gaming: It's getting to be time to pay attention...

For the past several years, I've felt that I was just too busy to delve into the world of gaming. There is so much to do each and every day, who has time to spend blasting things away or dropping little bricks into slots? Recently, however, I thought I could feel something beginning to creep up on me, that I could feel a shadow about to fall over me. Yes, it was gaming, telling me that it was time to pay attention. This issue forced me to take a look at the games that are out there, and was I surprised! The best of them are creative and fun.

Gaming, is in fact a massive industry that I feel will begin to impact an animation artist's life more and more. As graphics continue to evolve and consumers' appetites create a demand for more detailed plots, the talents of people from the traditional animation areas will be recruited into the world of interactive animation. I don't think they will defect completely, but I can see a day when freelancing for an animation studio and then going to freelance at a gaming company will be viewed as the norm. The upside is going to be more companies added to the work-giving mix. In fact, some studios are already there. Jeff Fino of Wild Brain, whose *Green Eggs and Ham* just won the Annie Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Animated Interactive Production, recently told us that they work on games and their traditional animation projects side by side.

All in all, this diversion into multimedia has bolstered my opinion that perhaps the statement "Animation, the Art Form of the 21st Century" is true, as the multimedia field grows in use and prevalence in our daily lives. In this month's survey, "The Future of Gaming," some key players in the gaming biz offer us their ideas on what lies ahead.

I would also like to draw attention to this month's Student Corner article "How to Find a Job in Multimedia" by Pamela Kleibrink Thompson. Even if you aren't looking for a job specifically in multimedia, I suggest you read this article. Pamela offers a lot of solid advice to anyone looking for a job. Furthermore, her words about portfolios, resumés and demo reels are right on the money, even for traditional animation job seekers. When I was reviewing portfolios at Hanna-Barbera, nothing was more frustrating than opening up a portfolio and having it explode on my desk into a flurry of loose paper. Plus, when people at festivals would hand me CD-ROMs as portfolios, I'd think, "Thanks, it proves that you are really technologically savvy, but when it is 6:00 p.m., and I have to review all of the incoming portfolios...I don't have time to take the CD, go downstairs, print out the images for the producers who don't have CD-ROM players in their offices, etc." It is better to call and get it right the first time so that recruiters can truly, fairly evaluate the art work. The pet peeves of recruiters could go on and on and on for pages. But a good recruiter will look at your art and be able to find an appropriate place for you even if it isn't listed as your exact objective, so don't worry about perhaps missing out on work by being focused.

I would also like to thank Daniel Rein and his brother, Major Mike Rein for their fascinating article "Flight Simulators: A Bird's Eye View." After speaking to everyone from our local air force base to the Pentagon, I came across Major Mike Rein in the Air Force Personnel Center in Texas. He hooked me up with his brother, and we sent them nearly a dozen flight simulator games. Now we, non-pilots, can hear from an expert which flight simulator games are most like flying the real thing. Speaking with them and editing the article surely proved to me that flying a small, zippy jet is a world unto its own and indeed, a very complex and difficult one. For those of us used to standing firmly on the ground, it is hard to imagine situations where things are happening so fast one is hardly aware of where the ground even is!

This was a fun and an interesting issue to put together. I hope you find it just as intriguing. As always, we, welcome your comments and ideas at editor@awn.com.

Until next time...
Heather

editor@awn.com
December 1997

AWM welcomes letters to the editor and encourages this to be used as a forum for the discussion of ideas and feedback on issues raised in prior Magazine editions.

Anastasia "Review"

I truly feel that *Animation World Magazine* is the most intelligent and well-written publication out there. That is why I'm having trouble understanding the reasoning behind asking Harvey Deneroff to write the Anastasia review. How can you be truly critical of a film when you've written a book authorized by Fox about the film. This is exactly like asking a music group's manager to write a review of their latest album. Obviously he's not going to say extremely negative things about it. Now, I realize that Harvey Deneroff had no part in the making of the film but he was involved indirectly by writing *The Art of ...* book. For such a big film, I really would have liked to have a stronger viewpoint from a writer that would have given me some insight into the film. Mark Kausler's review of *Serious Business* was an utter beauty and told me more about the book than all the other countless reviews I've read about it. Tim Stocoak, "So, You Want To Open An Animation Art Gallery!" in your current issue is another example of the critical and eye-opening writing that I've come to expect from your fine publication.

This is no way meant to demean Harvey Deneroff's writing but I think it would have been wiser on your part to think again before asking somebody connected so closely with the film to write a review of it.

Sincerely,
Amid Amidi

———————————————

First off, I have to say that I work for Disney and thus have a bias.

I looked forward to reading the review of *Anastasia.* Reading it, I noticed that it seemed rather anti-Disney. That's okay. Everyone has their opinions on our work.

But then I read at the bottom that Mr. Deneroff wrote the book *The Art of Anastasia.* How can I possibly respect any portion of the review? It is completely biased by someone involved with the production.

I can't wait to see the movie, but I have to question your editorial judgment on choosing a reviewer. I hope you don't show a similar disservice to our films by having one of our people write the review.

Mark Gilicinski

———————————————

Well, here's what we were thinking folks. We chose Harvey to write the review because he has amassed a large amount of knowledge about the film, *Anastasia, in order to write* The Art of Anastasia. *While he did write the book, he was not directly involved with the production. We are confident that Harvey would not have taken on this assignment had he felt he couldn't have been objective. We felt Harvey was the perfect candidate to complete this "review" as he could enlighten us with the historical background of Russia and the real-life story of Anastasia, the production, and offer context on both the historical and contemporary aspects of animated feature film.*

These letters, however have brought home a point to us. We often do not do "straight" reviews in our "Review Section." For instance, remember how we had the Greek scholar Dr. John Rundin review Hercules? *We hope that these approaches make the publication more interesting but from now on, perhaps we need to pay greater attention to the way we classify these types of articles.*

Thanks for the feedback.

Sincerely,
The Editors

———————————————

Staying in Touch

I would like to thank everyone involved in producing the *Animation Flash* newsletter for pro-

viding a quality service that I have found to be of immeasurable value in keeping up with the many changes in the industry. Since leaving my position as Senior Production Engineer with Class6 Entertainment in Hollywood for the peace and quiet of the Sierra, I felt I was losing touch with the industry. Your service brings me back into the fold without the negative consequences (traffic, smog, etc.). Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,
Brian Woodard,
Partner, Toler Productions

Tim Stocoak Article
I am startled to find you endorsing the kind of hate-filled article that Tim Stocoak linked to your otherwise information filled and enjoyable newsletter. I myself am a one-time "Studio Store" gallery manager, and now work with a reputable, independent gallery. I have seen the kind of things that Tim brings up, but they are not the rule, but rather the exception to it. Pessimism such as his will surely bring ruin down upon the animation art retail industry faster than any major studios mishandling of the limited edition market.

Anonymous

Publication in AWM does not necessarily mean endorsement. We strive to show a number of convergent viewpoints and ideas. Thank you for your letter. This is the sort of feedback regarding the "state of the industry" that we seek. It also should prove to consumers that they need to locate reputable animation art galleries before making any purchases.

Sincerely,
The Editors

Supply And Demand
It would be nice to see an article telling the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, about how animators were treated by the studios in the early days. Let's say someone like Virgil Ross, whom you didn't hear much about until roughly 1991. Prior, there had only been a few articles in *In Toon* magazine, or perhaps a small article in *Animato*. I guess animators were not important back then. You know, like Oswald, the (stolen) Rabbit. Well, Virge got his fame and I hope money, but where was everyone from 1950 to 1990? I would bet Fudge left some notes, or videos about that some where: that would make a good article or book.

I thank you for your time and you have a great magazine,
Joe J. DeLuca

Thank you for your suggestion. It is often the case that the details of history get lost over time. The people with firsthand knowledge of the early days are beginning to pass away, and hence, it is a crucial time to document such stories.

Sincerely,
The Editors

Welcome To the Neverhood

by Pamela Kleibrink Thompson

An anonymous warehouse in an Orange County industrial park is home to one of the most creative people in the video game industry. Just beyond a tidy receptionist area is a large room which contains a melange of artistic tools, from computers to animation disks, clay, acrylic paint and even live animals. Slappy, a hamster, which appears in the latest video game from the inhabitants of this dorm-room like studio, happily prowls his cage for food. A black scorpion which failed to make an appearance in *Skullmonkeys* occupies another cage, much to Slappy's relief.

This is the conference room of The Neverhood, a game development company founded by Doug TenNapel, who assembled a group of his friends and formed a company where innovation is the name of the game. Informality is the rule here, and titles are unimportant as evidenced by the Neverhood's business cards. As "mayor," Doug has the vision to make the Neverhood work.

> **"When you are creating zero you aren't adding anything to the world." - Doug TenNapel**

Orange love beads from the '70s which resemble throat lozenges strung together festoon Doug's office door. A Persian rug seems subdued under a wood-stained desk and neon-colored walls striped with orange and green paint. Doug's 6'8" body is sprawled on a print sofa as he contemplates a technical problem with a Neverhood inhabitant, Mark Lorenzen, who has been a friend for 14 years. We'll return later to interview Doug, but first Mike Dietz, "Ditch Digger" and lead animator, will show us the rest of the studio and explain how a group of 13 friends came together to create *Skullmonkeys* out of clay, latex and ingenuity.

A clay set in The Neverhood studio. ©The Neverhood.

Studio Tour Time

Skullmonkeys is the second puppet animated game for The Neverhood. Their first title, *The Neverhood,* introduced Klaymen, the character, to the video game industry and most of the team to puppet animation. *The Neverhood* was a puzzle adventure game developed for the PC and released in December 1996. The Neverhood team put in many 100-hour weeks to deliver the game on time and under budget to DreamWorks Interactive. They were in uncharted territory, having no experience in developing for PCs, working in puppet animation, or in doing a puzzle game, or even in working together. It's true that many of them had worked at Shiny Entertainment, on *Earthworm Jim,* which was created by Doug, but *Jim* was a platform game, done in traditional 2-D cel animation. *The Neverhood* was something altogether new, different and exciting. Only Doug had worked in clay before. Mike admits he was terrified, but that "the stop-motion animation community was completely open with sharing information, which is 180 degrees different from the video game industry where everything is a matter of national security."

Mike shows us how they built Klaymen's body with latex around a brass armature. He demonstrates how to do surgery using an exacto blade, slicing into Klaymen's body to reposition the armature. A box of eyes and mouths backed by thumbtacks lend Klaymen an array of emotions. Like playing with a Mr. Potato Head, Mike exchanges a mouth and eyes on Klaymen and suddenly, he looks surprised.

Mike explains the controlled design process used in their games. "Most of the interactive game ani-
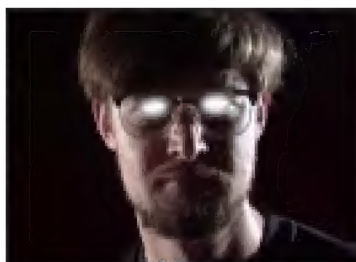
mation was done on paper first to help make all the hook-ups easier to pull off. With Doug's movies [mini-sequences in between levels] we mostly only storyboarded first, with only the more difficult scenes animated out on paper. I used a Panasonic digital AV mixer to flip between video of my drawings and my puppet." The puppets were shot on huge sets lit from over-head against a green screen. Large sets were required because the camera could not be restricted. The most frustrating aspect of working with the puppets was that they had physical limitations, unlike hand-drawn animation where anything was possible. Many puppets were broken in an extreme squash or stretch. He shows us a can of Pepsi covered with sculpey which appeared in the "boiler room" of their current game. "Whatever works," Mike says as he concludes the tour.

Note: For a more detailed look at the production processes used in animating The Neverhood's stop-motion games, read Mike Dietz's accompanying article, which includes a Quicktime movie of the animator at work.

Let the Interview Begin!

Doug's meeting with Mark Lorenzen is finally concluded, and he drives us to Coco's (a family-style chain restaurant) for lunch, in his wife's unassuming sedan. Doug wears a plaid shirt over his *Skullmonkeys* T-shirt and a Kermit watch. His thick glasses and beard don't hide his boyish enthusiasm. Despite his success in Hollywood, he is unpretentious and candid. He grew up in the outskirts of Turlock, California in Denair, raised around

Neverhood visionary, Doug TenNapel. Photo ©The Neverhood.

farms. His guilelessness is real, but he is not naive. His integrity is paramount.

Pamela K Thompson: What was your first job as an artist?

Doug TenNapel: I was a graphic designer at Sea World in San Diego. I was a mural artist. I designed costumes, props, and did whatever they needed me to do, menial tasks. I learned stage lighting from Debbie Rosengrandt which I use every day now in stop-motion animation.

PKT: How did you get involved in animation?

DT: I loved cartoons when I was growing up. I started making flip books when I was seven years-old.
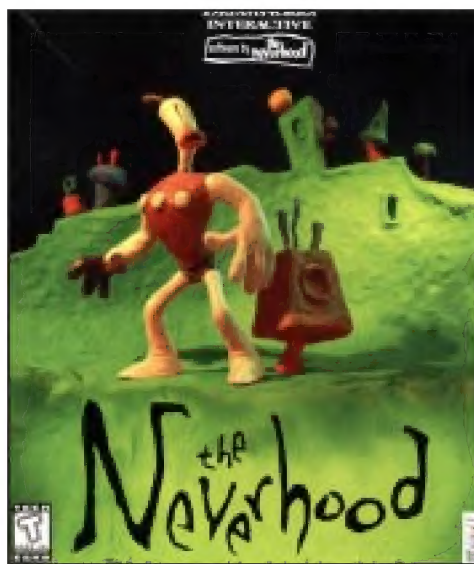
The Neverhood's eponymous debut game was released by DreamWorks Interactive in 1996. ©The Neverhood.

I used text books because they are big and thick. I drew on the page edges, things like a man walking. I was not a good animator. I was always impatient. My stuff looked bad. My animations got better after

working and doing it wrong and haphazardly. This lead to my ability to break the rules. What I never lost was speed. That's a non-negotiable for me.

"We're at the point where filmmaking was in the 1920s." - Doug TenNapel

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PKT: Who were your biggest influences in animation?

DT: Mike Dietz and Harriman who did *Krazy Kat* is a real inspiration to me. I admire people who did their own thing just like I am doing my own thing. I was influenced by Warner Bros. cartoons because I watched so much of it, I must have been affected by it. The Disney stuff did not have as much impact for me. I can learn more from Warner Bros. I can see it better. If it was the 1940s, I'd be working for Warner Bros. I would work for Clampett if I could work for anybody.

PKT: What are your favorite TV shows?

DT: *Gilligan's Island* is the greatest TV show ever made, like Laurel and Hardy with sound. What a great premise. Currently the only TV show I watch is *Siskel & Ebert* because I tend to be home on Sundays. And I watch *The X Files*. My favorite movies are the darker comedies from the Coen brothers, like *Raising Arizona*.

PKT: And your favorite video games?

DT: *Robotron*, the original version. *Myst, Mario 64, Command and Conquer...*

PKT: Tell me about the early days.

DT: Angie and I were married in 1990 and I was making $4,000 a year doing freelance illustration in San Diego. I worked about an hour a day and played *Ms. Pac Man* at the Laundromat. Our expenses were about $400 a month. I was desperate for work. Then AFT (American Film Technologies) got a project called *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes,* a Saturday morning cartoon show. They had to find 150 animators. I barely got hired, I'm not good on presentation. I learned how to read a storyboard and an x-sheet and got paid minimum wage. There were a lot of mediocre talented people there including myself who were all overwhelmed. I became the lead animator and worked from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Ron Brewer was the director on *Killer Tomatoes* and translated Warner Bros. cartoons to me, which changed my animation a lot.

I did some freelance work for Real Time and Associates. Dave Warhol gave me a 486 [computer] to work on at home. I did some freelancing on *Batman* for Park Place. The money I made freelancing was used to make a down payment on our house.

I was desperate for work and applied to Blue Sky Software, and was going to take a job for $22,000 US, but then a bidding war happened between Blue Sky and Park Place and I ended up starting at Blue Sky at 28K ($28,000 US). I was the lead artist on *Jurassic Park* [the game] for Genesis and we did

some puppet animation in that. We got to use a raptor puppet from the movie that cost 75K ($75,000 US). I can still remember how the armature worked. I cold-called Steve Crow at Virgin.

Mike Dietz: David Bishop called me into his office to look at Doug's portfolio, which were these wonderful paintings of toasters done on paper bags.

Animator Mike Dietz demonstrates how he animates puppets in a "green screen" set which will later be replaced by backgrounds in the computer. © The Neverhood.

DT: You can't always believe a portfolio. People get caught up in presentation. I don't know if I'd hire myself. I'm not good at presentation but my content is very strong.

> **"Developers have to be responsible with the team, budgets and designs." - Doug TenNapel**

MD: Once content is there anyone can do the polish.

DT: Discipline is an underrated talent. And patience. We always admire in others what we lack in ourselves.

MD: Everyone at The Neverhood has one thing they are *very* good at and many things they are good at. Everyone has to wear a lot of hats.

DT: The team is well-balanced. Everyone is confident enough to defer to others and everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. I'm real interested in seeing the whole team do well and learn. I don't want to do the same job all the time.

PKT: What qualities do you look for in an employee?

DT: They have to be versatile, have a sense humor, be loving, friendly and be fun to be with. I'm real selective in choosing an employee. I trust all my employees to go above and beyond the call of duty. I expect more than what I can pay. I can't ask that of people I don't know. I've picked up guys at every place I've worked.

PKT: How did The Neverhood get started?

DT: After I left Virgin, I went to Shiny where we did *Earthworm Jim.* I decided to leave and start my own company and got a commitment from Mark and Ed Schofield. Two weeks after I left Shiny, I announced at E3 that I was starting my own company and DreamWorks offered us the best deal to do our game. By the end of the summer we had

A scene from Skullmonkeys, Neverhood's new game, for Sony PlayStation. ©The Neverhood.

our team together and had funding. DreamWorks allowed us to survive. They wanted to break into the game industry and needed some experts to help them. It was a good combination. They took risks along with us. I admire that. They are not doing the same old thing that everyone else is doing. When you are creating zero you aren't adding anything to the world.

> **"I would be less scared going to medical school than going into 3D animation." - Doug TenNapel**

PKT: What do you like best about working in games?

DT: The freedom. Where else in Hollywood can you get money to write your own story, do production, do your own voices and not have to work with a union? This is a business where you're free to pioneer. The thing I love about it is that it makes you think on your feet and respond quickly. We're at the point where filmmaking was in the 1920s. Game animation still has a long way to go.

PKT: What advice do you have for other game developers?

DT: Project-oriented hiring is bad for games. It's hard to find great people. The problem with the industry

is people don't deliver when they say they will. Hit your deadlines. Be respectable and responsible to your financial partners. Don't break your promises. Hold up your end. I was disappointed that we were a month late with *Skullmonkeys*. It doesn't matter if we were a day late or an hour late. If we didn't hold up our end of the deal then how can we expect the people we are in business [with] to hold up their end? I have expectations from them to have autonomy, support, competence and timely payment. Developers have to be responsible with the team, budgets and designs. And deliver a quality product.

PKT: Do you have any advice for students?

DT: Learn life drawing and a 3-D program like 3D Studio Max. Notice I didn't mention anything about doing puppet animation in your garage?

PKT: What's next for The Neverhood?

DT: We're not sure. We will do a third game for DreamWorks but we are not sure if that is going to be our next project. We may do something in another medium. We are probably going to do something with 3-D [computer animation] in our next game and that scares me. I would be less scared going to medical school than going into 3-D animation. But we have to try it. The best creative stuff happens when serious limitations are imposed.

At The Neverhood, whatever they do next, you can be sure that it will be a new challenge to the team, giving them an opportunity to do

what they do best - to be inventive, ingenious and to create something unique.

For a more detailed look at the production processes used in animating The Neverhood's stop-motion games, read animator Mike Dietz's accompanying article, which includes a Quicktime movie of the animator at work.

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson is an independent recruiter. Her past clients include Walt Disney Feature Animation, Fox Feature Animation, and Dream Quest Images and Engineering Animation Inc. and interactive companies such as Raven Software, Hollywood On Line, Activision, and Adrenalin Entertainment. Thompson is also a consultant to colleges and universities helping them design their animation training programs. As manager of art at Virgin Interactive Entertainment, she established the art department, recruiting, hiring and training 24 artists, many with no previous computer experience. Her animation production background includes features such as Bebe's Kids, *the Fox television series* The Simpsons, *and the original* Amazing Stories *episode of* Family Dog. *Thompson is a founding member of Women in Animation and active in ASIFA. Her articles on animation, business and management topics have appeared in over 40 periodicals. She is currently writing a book called* The Animation Job Hunter's Guide.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

Our Animation Process

by Mike Dietz

How do you go from stop-motion puppet animation to CD-ROM computer graphics? Mike Dietz of The Neverhood details the animation process for us, using their project Skullmonkeys as an example.

The animation done for the *Skullmonkeys* game is broken down into two groups: one is the interactive/gameplay animation and the other is the cinematic sequences.

> **Since every game session is different, it is impossible to script out exactly what Klaymen and the other characters are going to be doing.**

Mike Dietz of the Neverhood, animating puppets for the game Skullmonkeys. ©The Neverhood.

Interactive Animation

The interactive animation represents all of Klaymen's actions (Klaymen is the character that the game player is controlling), and all of the actions of the characters that Klaymen interacts with during gameplay. All of this animation was done by two animators, Edward Schofield and myself, using a system that I developed during production of our PC game, *The Neverhood*. Since every game session is different, it is impossible to script out exactly what Klaymen and the other characters are going to be doing. As a result, what we do is animate short sequences of actions such as runs, jumps, climbs, etc., and design these sequences so that they can flow smoothly from one to the other in every conceivable order.

> **The animation was shot using Sony DCR-VX 1000 digital cameras connected to Pentium PC's via Sony DVBK-1000 Fire Wire Still Image Capture Boards..**

Pre-Production

Our process of doing this for *Skullmonkeys* was first to animate all of these sequences out on paper before any stop-motion work was done. We then scanned these drawings into the computer and did a quick digital ink and paint job using AXA software. This allowed us to take these digital pencil tests and put them into our game engine. We could then test the actions in actual gameplay before moving on to the stop-motion work. Any problems found at this stage were easily fixed by altering the pencil test drawings.

Once the animation was approved, we built our puppets using traditional stop-motion techniques (clay, latex, wire armatures, ball and socket armatures, etc.) and shot them on green screen sets.

The Neverhood's digital animation set-up includes a digital camera, a capture board, an Animation Toolworks Video Lunchbox, a digital video mixer, a monitor and a multi-gigabyte computer to store images.

Green screens were used so that any given action only had to be shot once and then later dropped in, in front of the many different backgrounds in the game.

Animation

The animation was shot using Sony DCR-VX1000 digital cameras connected to Pentium PC's via Sony DVBK-1000 Fire Wire Still Image Capture Boards. Using this combination of camera and capture card allows us to capture the images digitally and transfer them to the computer without ever having to do an analog conversion. We also had a secondary video feed coming out of the camera hooked up to an Animation Toolworks Video Lunchbox and a monitor. This allowed us to get instant feedback while animating, as the Lunchbox is capable of storing and playing back 256 frames of animation. Also patched into this monitor was a second camera mounted on a copy stand with pegbars, so that we could use a Panasonic Digital AV mixer to flip between our live image of the puppet and our pencil test drawings. This made it easier to make sure all of our sequences hooked up properly, and allowed us to see if we were straying too far from our original drawings.

> **ToolX allows our animators to have complete control of how their animation looks on screen.**

ToolX

Once the animation was complete, we took the sequentially numbered bitmap files (that is the output file format from the Sony Capture software) and loaded them into Debabelizer Pro, where we chroma-keyed out the greenscreen. We then took these images and built our sequences using our proprietary animation scripting software, ToolX, which was written by one of our programmers, Kenton Leach. Using this tool was similar to entering the images into an expo-sure sheet, which then wrote out a proprietary sequence file which could be read by our game engine, which again was written by Kenton, Tim Lorenzen and Brain Bellfield. Rather than having a programmer try to get it as close as he can, ToolX allows our animators to have complete control of how their animation looks on screen.

Cinematic Sequences

The cinematic sequences, which were all directed and nearly all animated by Doug TenNapel, were shot in a much more traditional fashion. These are the short, non-interactive movies that a player gets to watch throughout the game. The only difference between these sequences and a typical stop-motion production was that Doug used the same digital camera set-up that Ed and I used on our green screen sets. Once Doug was done with his shots he loaded his sequential images into Autodesk Animator Studio, where he edited them and built .AVI files. These .AVI files were then compressed for playback on the PlayStation using the Sony PlayStation movie compressor. At this point, the final soundtracks were also mixed in as .WAV files.

And that's pretty much how we produced all of the animation in the *Skullmonkeys* game.

Some people can make it sound so easy.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

Multimedia Down Under

by Mark Morrison

The problem with Australia has always been distance. It's a fair whack from one side of the country to the other, and an even further whack to the rest of the world. No wonder it was the ideal place for the English to send their convicts in the 18th century; the probability of seeing them back in England to steal another loaf of bread (aghast!) was next to nil.

The problem remains to this day (the distance, not the convicts). As a consequence, Australians are, by and large, communication junkies. We are world leaders in per capita ownership of fax machines, and not far behind with mobile phones. The world is just as far away as it was in 1788, but at least now we can fax 'em.

The latest solution could be multimedia. Multimedia applications offer smart methods of bridging geographical isolation, and also offer possibilities for taking Australian technology to the rest of the world (the 'clever country' is a phrase that gets a fair work-out here). Laudably, Federal and State governments have hitched themselves firmly to the interactive bandwagon, and created a unique infrastructure which offers support both in terms of finances and resources. Australian multimedia creators have the option

In Gott's Treasure, a CD-ROM created by Australian game developer, Greg Zaritski, two characters roam the globe looking for riches, not unlike Australian multimedia developers trying to make it in the global marketplace. ©1997 GZ-Interactive

of assistance from several funding bodies. Principal among these are the Australian Multimedia Enterprise (AME), the Australian Film Commission (AFC), and the Multimedia 21 Fund.

> **Of Australia's 18 million inhabitants, 865,000 of them were watching their CD-ROM drives spin as of 1995.**

One of the many difficulties in discussing multimedia is that it's so damn broad; the word covers anything from touch screen informa-

tion kiosks to intelligent toasters. To narrow the focus, I'll use examples from my favorite form: computer games. Don't make that face. Some of them are darn educational.

The Australian Multimedia Enterprise

In 1994 the then Prime Minister Paul Keating threw $84 million Aust. into the multimedia bucket with his Creative Nation policy. Creative Nation was designed to foster multimedia in Australia over a three-year period, and provided for the creation of the Australian Multimedia Enterprise (AME), a body which would oversee the investment of the lion's share of money provided by the scheme.

Under the byword of "finance for the multimedia content industry," the AME has since its inception invested $15.8 million in 38 projects with total budgets of $31.7 million, and funded 70 concepts to a total of $3.3 million. AME investment is on a buy-back basis; the organization provides funds to assist in development, on the understanding that a sum equal to double the advance will be repaid when the project attracts a publisher or other investors. Until then, the AME owns its share.

Alfred Milgrom is on the board of the AME. As manager of Beam International, a company with a 15-year history of producing computer games, he is one of Australia's longest-serving multime-

dia professionals. Milgrom says, "There has been a history of pork barreling with funding schemes for the arts in Australia. At its worst, projects would be launched purely with a mind to attract funding, with no real job at a multimedia company. ME forced people to look at commercial realities, and to have a proper business plan."

Alan Stockdale is Australia's Minister for Multimedia, a unique government position created to boost the country's interactive industry.

The strong commercial models advocated by the AME have ultimately led to a conflict of purpose: its industrial development brief, versus its role as a venture capital investment fund. This has resulted in some degree of compromise. "Sometimes I think we should have planned to spend all the money in the first three years," says Milgrom.

It is now 1997. Government has changed hands since Keating announced Creative Nation, and these days it's even a bit of a faux pas in political circles to use the words "nation" and "creative" in the same sentence. The AME was formed as a private company. The government of the day subscribed $45 million into the AME, and took ownership of all the shares. Now the new government is looking to sell. Martin Cooper, chair of the AME, is adamant that there will be no changes in the running of the organization when it is privatized. A more pessimistic view is that the AME will continue, but will be more stringent in placing venture capital into multimedia development, if it does at all. The point for now is moot, as a new owner is yet to appear.

The Australian Film Commission

The Australian Film Commission (AFC) was established in 1975 to encourage the making, promotion, distribution and broadcasting of Australian programs. The AFC was quick to add New Media to the roster when the form emerged, with the brief to assist "people exploring the creative uses of multimedia."

As such, the AFC has been bold in supporting artistic projects. This diversity can be seen in the AFC's on-line New Media Gallery, which showcases projects such as Jon Cormack's unsettling but undeniably beautiful *Turbulence*, "an interactive museum of unnatural history." The AFC is also more than willing to back commercial projects, which has led to the odd demarcation dispute between the it and the AME.

Kathy Mueller, director of Gameplay 21, was in the enviable position of being offered funds by both organizations to produce a prototype of her game *Galax-Arena*, an empowering adventure game for adolescents set in an oppressive futuristic circus. "The AFC was very supportive, very innovative, and very understanding of the amount of time it takes," says Mueller. "The AME saw that the project could be very commercial, but the financial complexity didn't allow as much creative time. For me, the AFC was a better initial investment, but if I can get overseas interest for part of it, I can go back to the AME."

The AFC has also been proactive in promoting Australian multimedia productions at MILIA and other markets, and maintains an online database listing more than 500 current projects underway in the country.

The Multimedia 21 Fund

It is no coincidence that the head office of the AME was established in Melbourne, the capital of Victoria. Of the State Governments, the Victorian Government has been the most pro-active in supporting multimedia. Alan Stockdale holds the portfolio of Minister for Multimedia, a unique position in western politics. His interest guarantees strong media coverage of any new development in multimedia or information technology. Stockdale is no lightweight; his other portfolio is State Treasurer. (He also sports the finest set of eyebrows in Australian politics.)

Beyond the photo ops and back at the coalface (office), the Victorian Government has committed $15 million to Multimedia Victoria 21. Cinemedia administers the Multimedia 21 Fund, and will continue to give creators $3 million a year for the next three years. This is a major accomplishment for a State government, and proof of a commitment to both multimedia and to transforming government through information technology.

The CD-ROM was completed and delivered to Australian schools, collected an award for Best Educational Multimedia Product in 1996, but has yet to have a commercial release.

The Creators Speak

Strong infrastructure, government sponsorship, and an all around brave new world vibe ... sounds like just the thing to breed a strong young industry. The vibe is there, but the successes are not necessarily in tow. Many companies get the help they need to get up

and running, but fail at that old distance hurdle.

Overseas distribution is vital. Of Australia's 18 million inhabitants, 865,000 of them were watching their CD-ROM drives spin as of 1995. Once again, not a bad per capita effort, but a single CD-ROM product with a budget of $1 million needs to shift 100,000 copies for any hope of getting the money back. Getting your print run into one in ten of Australian homes is a bit of an ask, especially as Australians are not necessarily patriotic about their purchasing. When a computer game I worked on came out in 1995, a friend was dissuaded from buying it by a shop assistant. When asked why, the assistant replied, "Well, you know ... it's Australian."

Companies who are flinging themselves into the face of this adversity include Word Design Interactive, GZ-Interactive and SAI Media (formerly Show Ads Interactive - that "i" word sure gets around).

Animals, Myths & Legends

Bob Smith and Mary Lancaster form Word Design Interactive, based in Melbourne. They are an ideal example of independent creators who have been attracted by the possibilities of the medium, and have benefited from the support structure.

Their projects are both games. *Animals, Myths and Legends* is an exploration fantasy for 7-12 year-olds. They have a research web site which introduces the characters and plot and also features some activities (www.ozemail.com.au/~oban). "We've been successful in capturing the attention of our target market. Kids love the three main characters and we've won several awards."

Their other game is *Mystery*

Brisbane company Auran has an international hit with *Dark Reign*, a real-time strategy game published worldwide by Activision. ©Auran.

at Ghost Mine, an adventure for 10-14 year-olds, with a story line that links the gold fields of Australia and California at the time of the U.S. Civil War. They have finished a promotional CD-ROM, and are looking for a publisher or distributor attachment. "Both projects received concept development funding from the Australian Multimedia Enterprise. We've found the Australian funding infrastructure supportive for new projects, but not really helpful in finding publishers or distribution deals. Our company has been in operation for about 5 years, but we're still 'unknown' in the global industry and this makes it difficult to get a project into full production."

Gott's Treasure

Greg Zaritski is the GZ in GZ-Interactive (http://www.gz-interactive.com.au). His story is similar, save for the funding body involved. He is a Melbourne animator and designer with an eye for the absurd. Zaritski's first multimedia work was *Totally REDiculous* (1995), a collec-

tion of animated stories based on stereotypes about Russia, arranged in a simple game structure. Russian bears growl fearfully and cosmonauts look suitably lost in Zaritski's hilarious lumbering animated regime.

His follow-up is the adventure game *Gott's Treasure,* in which he turns his satiric eye on the rest of the world. His characters Gott, a goat, and Gunov, a minuscule Red Army soldier, roam the globe looking for Gott's family riches, a race before Gott's grandmother despairs and floods the world with her tears. Players guide the two through different countries, looking for the missing pieces of a map which shows the fabled location of the treasure. "I've found that if I had a lot of fun during the creation of the project, it is usually fun for the audience as well," he says. Both titles have received national and international awards. "But more importantly, both projects were very well received by the audience," he adds.

An extensive working proto-

type was funded by the Australian Film Commission who, Zaritski says, "have been great in supporting the project." Unfortunately, Gott and Gunov have since been stranded. "I am currently looking for a publisher, and it is not easy. A lot of my letters to the publishers are unanswered."

The distance gremlin may have kept Zaritski pegged back after his head start. He partially agrees. "I've met a lot of European multimedia artists who knew each other really well because they all live relatively close together. With today's communication structure it should be easy, but I imagine the ways of overseeing the work in progress would be a hurdle in the mind of a potential partner."

Consumer Power

Until Gott finds that treasure, Zaritski is working as a designer at SAI Media, a South Australian company with offices in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney (http://www.saimedia.com.au). They have produced 150 multimedia applications in the last three years, in a range of corporate and educational fields.

Sometimes these goals converge in a game form. *Consumer Power 2* was commissioned by the National Primary Schools Consumer Education Project as a tool to teach smart consumer skills to children aged 10-13. Government funds

Smarty Pants, an educational multimedia division of Beam Software, received $900,000 from the AME to produce CD-ROMs such as *Mike Teaches English*. ©1997 Smarty Pants

covered the production budget, so SAI were able to complete the whole game rather than just a prototype.

The result is a fine example of that most sly of genres: education by stealth. The player gets so involved with the fun of a shopping spree in a virtual fantasy mall populated by both honest and shady vendors, that the solid tips on good shopping sense get straight through. Any game with money and talking rats at its heart is bound to be of interest. (Why *CP2*, you ask? The original *Consumer Power* was a board game. Oh, and the talking rat? He is one of your choices as a guide. Rats and malls; I can see the connection.)

The CD-ROM was completed and delivered to Australian schools, collected an award for Best Educational Multimedia Product in 1996, but has yet to have a commercial release. This is holding back Gabrielle Kelly of SAI, who is eager to do a sequel. "It is hard to find the

production budget. The feedback from overseas is that there is a market for Consumer Education products and that a new title would be welcome, once the old one is released for sale." She is still waiting.

Outside the Infrastructure

The irony is that the Australian game companies kicking the most goals in overseas markets are doing it largely outside of the infrastructure. Their targets in sight are hard-core computer gamers, a proven market.

Brisbane company Auran has an international hit with *Dark Reign*, a real-time strategy game published worldwide by Activision. *Dark Reign* follows the formula of market leading games such as *Command & Conquer* and *Warcraft 2*, and also adds features. For example, opposing armies still wallop the tar out of each other as they are accustomed, but now they can do it up and down hills. This may not sound like much, but the elevation from a 2-D playing surface is a significant advance. *Dark Reign* is racking up a slew of 90% ratings in gaming reviews, and has firmly established the Queensland outfit on the world scene. Not bad for a company which, as founder Greg Lane expresses on the Auran web site, "began as a new year's resolution."

Another success story is

Sydney outfit Strategic Studies Group (SSG). *Warlords 3*, the latest incarnation of their popular and devilishly addictive medieval strategy game, has been published by Broderbund. SSG have not been in the business of applying for grants or "media showboating," but have instead kept their heads down, producing great games.

> **The irony is that the Australian game companies kicking the most goals in overseas markets are doing it largely outside of the infrastructure.**

Melbourne mob Tantalus have been squirreling away, producing straight conversions of overseas designs from one platform to another, such as *Wipeout* and *Manx TT Superbike* for the Sega Saturn home console machine. Perhaps not as exciting as original creation, but it has kept the lights working and the coders coding.

Emergent Software in South Australia are developing a cutting edge 3-D racing game which attracted great interest at E3, the principal trade show for electronic entertainment, held in Atlanta, last July.

One of the more interesting projects is *Cyberswine,* produced by Brilliant Digital Entertainment, in conjunction with Sega Australia. Cyberswine is the porcine hero of an Australian underground comic series. His electronic adventure will be delivered via the web as a "multipath movie," with future episodes available for downloading.

A Foot in Both Camps

The AME are by no means out of this rowdy picture. Garner McLennan in Sydney are developing two high end 3-D games, each with a different American partner, and each with AME backing. Fellow harbour-siders Energee Entertainment have been financed to produce a CD-ROM game based on their distinctly Australian animation series, *Crocadoo*. Stromlo Entertainment have also set up in Australia with an eye to AME funding, and have a publishing deal with Electronic Arts. It all looks as if the Australian barbarians are well and truly storming the international gates.

Another company that plays the game both ways is Milgrom's Beam International (http://www.beam.com.au). Beam have a 15-year history of independent computer game development for overseas publishers. *Krush, Kill 'n' Destroy (KKND)*, the strategy game with the title that makes no bones about its primary purpose, was a worldwide hit distributed internationally by Electronic Arts in 1996. Beam have just published *Cricket '97 Ashes Tour Edition*, the latest in a popular series of sports sims. (Which is fairly appropriate, as cricket is not unlike a simulation of an actual sport. It's an English thing. Don't blame us, we inherited it when they shipped those damn convicts over here.)

> **It all looks as if the Australian barbarians are well and truly storming the international gates.**

The degree of diversity at Beam borders on the ludicrous. Other projects include *Splash*, a new HTML editor; Motion Capture Magic, the only commercial motion-capture studio in Australia; and a new facial motion-capture package called Famous Faces which ports straight into Softimage. Milgrom has

high expectations for the film and television possibilities for Famous Faces. Judging by the interest shown by ILM staffers at SIGGRAPH this year, he could be right.

Beam has also spawned Smarty Pants, an educational multimedia division which received $900,000 from the AME to produce 11 CD-ROMS teaching language to 5-7 year-olds. Hang on. Wasn't Milgrom on the board of the AME? "Yes, but I did not sit on the decision to forward financing to Beam. Besides, we still have to pay it back."

As the AME's privatization deadline drags on, Milgrom is optimistic for the future of multimedia in Australia. "I think we have reached a critical mass of companies here now, and feel that the AME helped to bring about that awareness. If on-line growth performs as expected, the next three years should be even better."

For Mueller, Lancaster, Smith, Zaritski, Kelly and the hundreds of other multimedia workers in this country, let's hope so.

To his astonishment, Mark Morrison designs computer games for a living. He was the lead writer on The Dame Was Loaded, *and script editor on the* Galax-Arena *prototype for* Gameplay 21. *He currently works at Beam Software, and is worried he might have gone too easy on them.*

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

PlayStation: An Unassuming Jack

By Joseph Szadkowski

The saga for video game platform superiority is not unlike the fairy tale of Jack and the Giant Killer - the unassuming Jack is able to topple the monster through tenacity and quick wits.

In this electronic version of the tale, there are two giants, Sega of America with the Saturn video gaming console and Nintendo with the powerful N64 console. The mightier monolith in this saga is Nintendo whose N64 is the newest, only a year old, most powerful platform to reach the video game market. Featuring a 64 bit system, in comparison to the others 32 bit, Nintendo plugged the N64 as being the quantum leap in at-home video gaming, promising better graphics, smoother game play and, as gamers call it, increased eye-candy.

The Two Giants

All of this is possible because the N64 contains the ability to process complex images at a higher rate allowing gamers to play in virtual 3-D space environments with unrestrained interactive movement. The N64 also carries with it the ability for real-time processing of audio, 2-D and 3-D graphics, anti-aliasing features which remove jagged edges from screen images, increased color output, higher image resolution and a faster coprocessor which allows all of this to work. At least that's what Nintendo said.

Gaming statistics show that at this writing there are 2.6 million N64 consoles in gaming households, which equates to 31.71% of the overall market.

The Saturn, a 32 bit game, has since its debut in May, 1995 sold approximately 1.6 million consoles to American gamers, which is 19.51% of the overall market. Even though now the Saturn is the lowest-selling platform, Sega of America was, due to the popularity of their 16 bit Genesis system, the leader in gaming consoles.

The Saturn, as many loyal gamers will tell you, is truly the better video console.

The Saturn contains two main graphic processing units as well as an SDP math-coprocessor that aids in polygon (image) rendering. Add to this their custom sound processors that eliminate extraneous static, a whopping 16

After his first self-titled game sold over 1.5 million units, the character Crash Bandicoot has become something of a mascot for Sony PlayStation. Now Crash is back in *Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back*. © Sony Computer Entertainment of America

PlayStation, the gaming console dominating the U.S. market. © Sony Computer Entertainment of America.

million colors, and numerous other technical aspects and the Saturn, as many loyal gamers will tell you, is truly the better video console. Sega says the same thing, of course.

Who is Jack?

The role of Jack in this tale is played by the Sony PlayStation, the first gaming system ever produced by the multi-media conglomerate. The PlayStation has only been on the market since September, 1995, but has a solid lead on sales with over four million units in North American homes.

The PlayStation's innards consist of a 32-bit R300A main processor which offers 33MHz of speed with graphics resolution ranging from 256x224 to 640x480 with a whopping 16.7 million color palate.

How did Jack do it? The N64 is clearly the better platform with increased power, speed and graphic ability. For Saturn fans, the mighty 32 bit machine contains two graphic processors that allow faster game play while providing top-end graphics with over 32,000 colors and a brand name that offers immediate consumer recognition.

Jack's Simple Plan

The Sony PlayStation's lead is due to its simple marketing and planning. A strong foundation has been built from the number of games that have been released, combined with an aggressive marketing attack and smart business practices.

Sony made it easier for license game developers to create new games for the PlayStation. Opening its licensing to multiple developers allowed for numerous advertising campaigns promoting PlayStation product. Of course, these advertising campaigns were designed to entice gaming's pri-

Disney's Hercules Action Game, a new PlayStation title developed and published by Virgin Interactive and Disney Interactive, using Sony's third-party software license. © Disney Interactive.

marily male, adolescent demographic with extreme visual flash and the promise of previously unexperienced challenges and competition.

> There is no doubt that Nintendo rushed the N64 to market last Christmas without putting enough thought into the fact that consumers, once they had this very cool toy, would actually want to use it.

In addition, Sony made sure, unlike its blustering competitors, to keep the retailers happy by keeping the PlayStation on the shelf. Sega ignored secondary electronic store

retailers (the mom and pop shops) when first distributing the Saturn and have been dealing with the backlash ever since.

Then in 1996 the price wars started. Sony announced the PlayStation's U.S. $200 price point to compete with the initial $249. N64 price point. Nintendo and Sega matched Sony. Then in the spring of 1997 Sony pushed Sega and Nintendo again, by reducing the PlayStation's price to $149.00. Of course, the others matched the price but it was clear that Sony was the leader and the others could only react.

Dropping the retail cost of the console helped a surge of new consumers decide to purchase the Sony PlayStation. The notation of interest here is that the cost to manufacture the consoles does widely surpass their shelf-price; or in other words, money is lost on every console sold. The theory is, though, that if you have a huge library of games, such as has been developed for the PlayStation, those dollars lost can be made up elsewhere.

Supplying the Gamers

The true key to any success in the video game market may be feeding the beast. A new gaming system can only succeed if it has enough games to make it worth buying. Looking at the number of games available for the three leading platforms, Jack is becoming stronger than his foes all the time...

There is no doubt that Nintendo rushed the N64 to market last Christmas without putting enough thought into the fact that consumers, once they had this very

NFL Gameday '98. © Sony Computer Entertainment of America.

cool toy, would actually want to use it. The system released with only two games, *Pilotwings 64* and *Super Mario 64,* on the shelf and, as of this writing, there are only 27 games on the market for the N64. Nintendo is promising to release an additional three games for the 1997 Christmas season.

Another downfall for Nintendo is that they opted to use the more expensive cartridge disk to house their N64 games, versus the CD-ROM that the Saturn and PlayStation use. For the game developer, the decision as to whether to work within the parameters for Saturn and PlayStation, whose CD-ROMS cost about $2.00 per disc to replicate, or the N64 cartridge that carries a cost burden upward of $30.00 per cartridge to reproduce, left the N64 out in the cold.

Sega, which had been the leader in 16 bit gaming consoles with the original Sega Genesis system, released the Saturn with only three games to support the system. An interesting point is that co-giant, Sega of Japan, released the system in Japan with the support of over 25 games right from the start. By the time Sega could get enough games in their library it was too late. Sony PlayStation was out and aggressively putting together a library that eclipsed Sega's.

To date there are almost 200 Saturn games on the retail shelf, almost as many as the PlayStation, but the initial loss of momentum meant Sega lost customers it could never win back. Why buy two gaming systems?

Sony's PlayStation continues to put out as many games as possible, over 60 games in 1997 alone. Compare this to only 27-30 for the N64 and 20 for Sega. The total list of PlayStation games encompasses over 220 games that cover a wide spectrum of interest, including all manners of racing, sports, role playing, and fighting games. In addition, the library contains games that can be enjoyed by the cartoon aficionado, the X-treme sports dude, the male adolescent or the teenage girl.

For those developing their holiday buy list, it would seem obvious that the gaming console to buy would be the one that provides the most play options - the Sony PlayStation. Technically, the system rivals the Saturn and only the very hard core gamer is able to discuss the merits embroiled in the technical minutia anyway.

What really matters is which system is going to provide the family, from young sister through teen brother to mom and dad, the most gaming options. For no reason other than its extensive library of games and increasingly diminished

price point (Sony now offers a line of classic titles in the $20.00 US price range with many new titles available for under $40.00 US), which means there are more games to rent and buy, it has to be the PlayStation.

Top Game Picks
Here's five titles in PlayStation's wide selection that I consider to take full advantage of the Sony technology.

NFL Gameday '98 (Sony Entertainment, $39.95) Yes, it is hard-edged football at its prettiest, if that's possible. Sony has spent a lot of money in building the most realistic football simulation on the market. The greatness of this game revolves around how it looks and

Final Fantasy VII. © Square Soft.

reacts. All of the players on the field use motion-capture technology and are fully 3-D polygonal, meaning crisp numbers on jerseys and very fluid, individual movements. Gamers get a Total Control mode that allows for diving over the top of the pile, the pump fake or the

one hand catch. This is one of the best of Sony's sports line.

Oddworld:Abe's Oddysee (GT Interactive, $49.95) Mixes the cartoon absurdity of MTV's *Oddities* with the shocking plot parallels of *Soylent Green*, to create a technological marvel of gaming. Our hero, Abe, discovers that his species, the Mudokons, are being turned into meat patties at his place of employment and uses intelligence, rather than extreme violence, in an epic struggle to set his people free. 2-D flip screen programming, loads of detailed characters, crisp background animation and a humorously flatulent hero make this a very hip game.

Sony's PlayStation continues to put out as many games as possible...

Tekken 2 (Namco, $49.95) The warriors of the Iron Fist Tournament return in a much grittier, much darker and much more sinister slam fest. Considered one of the best 3D fighting games available, the more than 15 characters are very unique because of their multiple moves and limitless play value. The graphics are very detailed offering interesting worlds and arenas. The story may not be as interesting as *Star Gladiators* but how many times do you get to battle the devil?

Nuclear Strike (Electronic Arts, $49.95) In a sequel to last year's *Soviet Strike*, players are plunged into the jungles of Southeast Asia in a struggle to stop a maniac. Gamers complete 25 detailed missions within five levels of play, starting behind the controls of a Super Apache helicopter. Various objectives include rescuing civilians and hostages, replenishing supplies and blasting anything resembling the enemy. As

players progress, they are offered a variety of vehicles and ships in which to rampage. As a result, there are excellent full motion video sequences.

Final Fantasy VII (Square Soft, $59.99) Three immersive CD-ROMs offer fantasy adventurers more than 50 hours of game play. One of the most popular role playing series ever created, *Final Fantasy* tells the tale of mercenaries, heroes and scalawags in breathtaking environments giving players the ultimate gaming experience. If you like to play video games and haven't heard about the merits of this title, where have you been?

The Battle Continues

And so, the battle continues for market share and product saturation among Jack and his two rival giants. One thing is certain, however; this healthy competition is good news for consumers, as it causes an increase in product and a decrease in prices. With PlayStation in the lead, Nintendo and Sega will surely devise new ways to get attention, and may even imitate Sony's clever development strategy. Hey, this corporate competition in and of itself sounds like a great concept for a battle/combat/strategy game.... the only problem is, which company should we pitch it to?

Joseph Szadkowski writes on various aspects of popular culture and is a columnist for The Washington Times.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

Tools of the Trade:
## What Do I Need to Create Interactive
Games?

by Tim Samoff

The lights are dim and all I can hear are the sporadic giggles of little Stevie playing *Mario Cart* on the Nintendo 64. His giggles are hindered only by an intense concentration that I've never before seen in a four year-old child. As his virtual go-cart rounds the corner, Stevie sways and tilts with the motion, his entire body possessed by the game. I'm amazed by the captivation achieved with this simple racing game, and can only hope that the next interactive title or game that I produce will seize this same kind of attention.

Already one month into our production cycle, I think back to the beginning: the process of writing the Design Doc, the scheduling of future asset creation, and the planning of what tools would be used to bring our new project into reality. We would be stuck with these tools for the next six to twelve months. When speaking of tools in the interactive world, I mean everything from Microsoft Excel to Adobe Photoshop and everything in between! When people ask me what programs I use, I usually just respond, "Everything." There's no easy answer to the question.

Being that the Design Doc is written and the schedule has been made, we need to concentrate on the tools that will be used

to create the assets that will make an idea reality. I'm talking about the art tools, the animation tools, and yes, the authoring, or programming, tools.
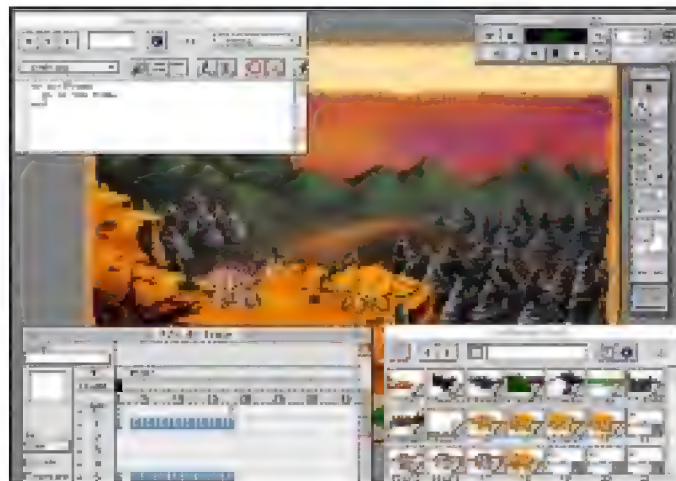
Powerful animation and authoring is combined in Macromedia Director. The Land Before Time™ MovieBook™ couldn't have been created without it. © Sound Source Interactive.

The Art

The first thing that needs to be started in any visual project is what's going to be seen. We're talking the art, the meat. What's going to keep the end-user looking at the screen?

> **When speaking of tools in the interactive world, I mean everything from Microsoft Excel to Adobe Photoshop and everything in between!**

How is this art going to be created? There are lots of programs out there designed for the creation

of digital art, but only a few are particularly useful. These are Adobe Photoshop, Fractal Design Painter, and Debabelizer. Of course, you need to find what you are most comfortable using, but these are my three favorites, and the favorites of most digital artists.

Each of these programs have a powerful set of equally useful, but different tools. The trick is to find which one will best suit the needs of your project. Usually all of these programs will find a place in your project, but it's up to you to find your favorite. Here are a few of the benefits of each of these programs:

- **Adobe Photoshop**
  Photoshop is best utilized in the creation of realistic images and is great for photo enhancing/altering. There is a strong set of "paint-like" tools, but nothing too organic. If you want an easy-to-use paint program where you can create almost anything, then Photoshop is for you.

- **Fractal Design Painter**
  If you're into organic, realistic painting and drawing, then Painter is where it's at. With everything from pencils with

multiple lead weights and various charcoals, to oil paints and water colors, Painter is the closest to real-life paint program I have ever used. There are even customizable paper textures! Although Painter is a little more complicated to learn than most other paint programs, it is well worth the patience.

Usually all of these programs will find a place in your project, but it's up to you to find your favorite.

- **Debabelizer**
  Ahhh...the interactive artist's best friend. Debabelizer is the "time-savingest" program ever invented. It's not that this program has any useful "painting" tools, because it doesn't, but when you need to convert 2,000 files to 256-color, 1-inch by 1-inch thumbnails, in BMP format, Debabelizer can't go wrong. This is *the* coolest thing in batch processing, and will save hours upon hours of potentially tedious work. It may take some time to learn Debabelizer, but it is a must have.

The Animation
So, most of the artwork is complete, and now you need to make it move. You can't just expect the thing to sit stationary on the screen do you? It's got to have some action. It's got to compel the user to click on things and explore...and have fun.

- **Macromedia Director**
  I think the best program for any kind of digital animation is Macromedia Director. Not only did Director begin as an anima-
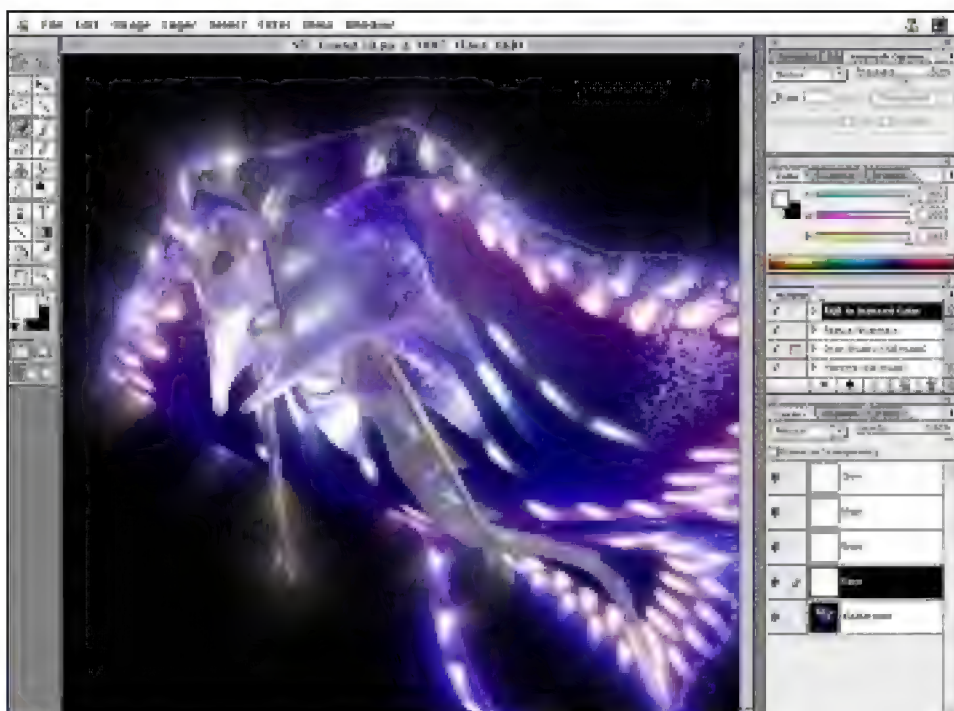
A friendly alien is touched-up in Adobe Photoshop, a tool which was used extensively in the creation of SSI's new adventure game, *The Abyss: Incident at Europa.* © Sound Source Interactive.

tion program from the very beginning (something a lot of so-called animation programs cannot boast), but it is the simplest to use, and can export file-types that most authoring environments can handle. Even if you can't use your Director animations in the final production of your project, it is still a great way to test your artwork to see if it's animating correctly.

Not only is Director great for animation, but it is also a very powerful interactive authoring tool.

The Programming (Or How To Make The Thing Work!)
This is the toughest question of all. Hopefully your team consists of a programmer, or programmers, that is comfortable in one authoring system or another, or maybe is most at home in C++. Whatever the case, something has to be done to put all of your artwork and anima-

tion together and make it work according to your Design Doc.

There are a number of authoring tools outside of C++, that have been created for people that are not necessarily programmers, but have a knack for figuring out technicalities. Of course, being a programmer and knowing the principles behind traditional programming is a big help.

A couple of these authoring programs include mFactory's mTropolis (pronounced "metropolis") and Macromedia Director. Yes, not only is Director great for animation, but it is also a very powerful interactive authoring tool. I've started to hear a lot of good things about some other authoring tools like Macromedia Authorware, but I've mostly used the aforementioned. This is really one of the most important decisions of a project (taking into account the schedule, what platforms the finished title will run on, what the end-system requirements are, etc.), so this is a decision best left up to your programmers.
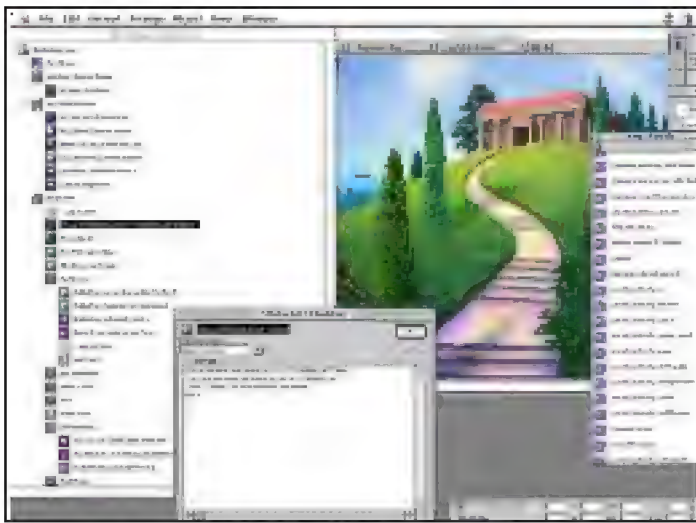
The Hercules & Xena™ Learning Adventure™ as seen from within mTropolis, a simple, non-linear multimedia authoring tool. © Sound Source Interactive.

- **mFactory mTropolis**

  mTropolis is a great non-linear authoring system that can be learned (on the surface, at least) by most resourceful people, but can never really be tapped into unless you have a good understanding of traditional programming. mTropolis is great for most interactive projects and some simple games, but could never be used to program high-paced 3D action games like *Quake* or *Tomb Raider*. If you're creating an activity center or an interactive kiosk, then this is most likely a good choice for you.

  Of course, being a programmer and knowing the principles behind traditional programming is a big help.

- **Macromedia Director**

  And back to Director... Again, this authoring environment is good for simple games and kiosk-type applications, but it is not the greatest if you're thinking about a full-fledged game. The great thing about this program, is that your animations are right there, ready to use in your interactive title.

- **C++**

  Traditional programming. A programmer's fantasy and nightmare. *Anything* can be done in C++, be it interactive titles, strategy games like *Command and Conquer* or action shooters like *Decent*. It is a great paradigm if you're a great programmer.

So there you have it, from the idea to the final stages: art, to animation, to programming. I've left out things like creating the design and the sound effects, music, and video, just to name a few things, but a subject like this could go on for years. Hopefully, this was enough to give an idea of what can be used to create an interesting interactive title or game.

Now, I need to go back in and watch little Stevie finish *Mario Cart.* See what keeps him intrigued. See what drives his imagination. Learn what I can to make my own cool game.

Tim Samoff is a Producer at Sound Source Interactive, where he has taken part in the creation of over 20 licensed edutainment titles, screen savers, and games including, Babe™ Interactive MovieBook™, Free Willy 2 Interactive MovieBook™, The Hercules & Xena™ Learning Adventure™, *and the* Babylon 5™ Limited Edition Entertainment Utility™. *He is currently producing a 3-D adventure game sequel to the James Cameron film,* The Abyss.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

Bonus HTML Features

Every online (HTML) issue of *Animation World Magazine* contains additional features not found in the download or print Acrobat version, such as Quicktime movies, links to Animation World Network sites, extended articles and special sections. Don't miss the following highlights that are showcased exclusively in this month's *Animation World Magazine* HTML version:

http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.9/2.9pages/2.9cover.html

- ***Welcome to the Neverhood*** Both our feature article on this innovative studio and Mike Dietz's article on their animation process, feature exclusive Quicktime movies, taking you inside the studio and the upcoming game, *Skullmonkeys*.

- ***A Conversation With Piotr Dumala and Jerzy Kucia*** Includes complete filmographies of both filmmakers, located in the Animation World Network Vault, as well as a Quicktime movie from Piotr Dumala's film, *Lycantrophy*.

- ***Un Jour: A Woman's Metaphorical Narrative*** Includes a Quicktime movie from the film, *Un Jour* by Marie Paccou.

- ***Russia: Gaming for Everybody*** Includes a brief summary of *Animatheka*, the Russian television series about animation.

Online Gaming:
From Avatars to Wizards

by Christopher Harz

Online gaming is a huge and rapidly growing business, employing thousands of animators and entertaining, and sometimes educating, millions the world over. Gaming fans range from the true addict with zombie-white skin to the white collar worker who sneaks an occasional game to relax.

Proponents state that multi-player games can challenge and develop the imagination, teach history and culture, and develop teaming and leadership skills. Opponents claim games can be too violent and lead to hermit-like unsociability. One thing that cannot be disputed is that online gaming is growing like wildfire. Total gaming industry sales are estimated by Infotech to be over $15 billion in 1997, and a large part of that involves games that can be played online, a market segment that Infotech calculates is growing at 70% per year. In fact, at the recent E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo) show in Atlanta, there were few solo (non-multiplayer) games visible, and a panel of venture capital executives stated flatly that they "would not even look at" games that were not playable online.

Some Definitions

To understand the genre, we should review a few basics. An online game is one that allows a gamer to be connected with others playing the same game, either via a LAN (local area network – many game stations such as the Sony PlayStations permit this), by modems connected directly over a phone line, or by a WAN (wide area network, such as the Internet). Game speeds vary from turn-based games (such as chess, where one player makes a move and waits for the response) to real-time games (such as *Quake 2*, which can have non-stop action).

Games may be Internet-only (playable only via the Internet), Internet-compatible (playable with or without online connection) or hybrid (involving mostly local storage and content with some interaction over the net). Hybrid games have the advantage that they already contain most of the game data stored on a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM, and it therefore does not have to be downloaded; since some games contain gigabytes of terrain, rules and character data, this can be a huge advantage. Hybrid games tend to be richer in detail and action, and put less processing strain on the server and the network.

Total gaming industry sales are estimated by Infotech to be over $15 billion in 1997, and a large part of that involves games that can be played online...

In a game, a player may be represented by an animated, human or non-human figure called an "avatar," a computer term derived for the Hindu word for a god that appears on earth in human or animal form ("ava," down, "tarati," he travels). Game figures such as orks, soldiers, dinosaurs and so on, that are not driven directly by a player are called "bots." They may be driven by AI or, "artificial intelligence," software that makes them respond unpredictably, "learning" or adapting as the game progresses. A "wizard" is a term for software that helps guide a player through a game. [Although many games feature wizards of the Merlin type, as well as knights, orcs, and magical spells, since they are based on the original D&D (*Dungeons and Dragons*) game.] A primary problem in online game play is keeping new players or "newbies" from being squashed by experienced, predatory "rogue" players.

Some of the types of games are strategic (such as *Panzer General* or *Warcraft,* chess-type

Quake II. ©Activision.

Jedi Knight. © LucasArts.

games usually played from a bird's-eye view in 2-D or "2 1/2-D," the latter allowing some level of perspective viewing), simulation or "sim," (such as *WarBirds* or *Armored Fist 2,* action games primarily focused on racing a high-resolution vehicle such as a plane, tank or car), RPG (Role Playing Game such as *Oddworld* or *Mechwarrior,* where the player takes on a personality with strengths and weaknesses and must confront a content-rich world demanding problem solving and possible combat), action (such as *Doom, Quake* or *Duke Nukem,* primarily fast combat games involving an avatar or simulated vehicle taking on all comers – sometimes referred to as a "twitch" game), adventure (such as *7th Guest* or *Under the Killing Moon,* which involve extensive story lines and problem solving), edutainment (such as *SimCity,* which has a strong educational component), as well as sports and adult games.

Game Environments

There are several different game environments:

• **Fee-Based Online Gaming Services (OGSs) or**

Game Sites.
Dedicated game sites such as TEN (The Entertainment Network) or Mpath provide a web site where gamers can log on, choose a game and a difficulty level, be assigned to a gaming area, and then go for it. Joining such an OGS normally involves a monthly or per-hour fee. Many OGSs provide a variety of games for you to download and play, which may require scads of time and hard disk storage space. Some games, especially hybrids, require that you buy the game package in a store. Although hybrids cost money (typically U.S. $30-$50), they offer high-resolution game play without permanently taking up

> **A panel of venture capital executives stated flatly that they "would not even look at" games that were not playable online.**

much hard drive space.

• **Free Online Gaming Service Sites.**

An increasing number of OGS sites offer free gaming to users. Many sites are supported by sponsorships, advertising in the form of banner ads, merchandising and other promotional tie-ins. Others are supported by the manufacturers of a CD-ROM game, which offer the site to facilitate online play.

• **Promotional Web sites.**
Many sites go up each month to promote films, television shows, entertainment events, or the multimedia firms that created them. Such sites offer a variety of free short games or "gamelets" that are related to the entertainment they promote. For instance, the recent film *Spawn* has a 3-D game on its web site that lets a player roam the streets as the main character from the film, shooting secret agents and tackling the evil Clown. Increasingly, such sites are 3-D, use the new Java and VRML (Virtual Reality Modeling Language) programming tools, and require a very short download time, perhaps a minute or so. They also have very simple game rules, as

Netstorm. © Activision.

they are oriented toward the casual user rather than the hard-core gamer.

• Military Gaming.

The U.S. Armed Forces and its allies play huge war games with hundreds of full-crew simulators representing tanks, helicopters, aircraft and other weapon platforms. Civilians cannot (legally) access this part of the Internet which is behind security barriers or "fire walls." However, thousands of digital animators/programmers work on such online games as SIMNET (Simulation Network), funded with billions of dollars from sources such as DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which invented the Internet in the first place.

Cool, Current Games

What are the hot games right now? Here are some of the hits from the E3 show:

- *Dominion,* by 7th Level, is a real-time strategy game in a sci-fi setting. Players are challenged by over 40 missions on many planets, with multiple vehicle and combat unit types to choose from.
- *Monday Night Football '98,* by ABC Interactive, is a sports game featuring real teams and players with roster updates via the Internet. You need a decent computer and graphics card to render this game in its full glory.
- *Links LS '98,* from Access, is a game for the indoor golfer that features authentic grass and sand textures and very realistic ball flight. Up to eight players can compete before heading to the club house.
- *Redline,* by Accolade, is an action game where the player joins an alliance (gamespeak for "a gang") and wages war on

rival groups, in vehicles or on foot. Up to 15 fans of this death-match genre can slug it out together.

- *Dark Reign: The Future of War,* from Activision, is a real-time strategy game with 3-D terrain, gorgeous graphics and player-controllable AI. It was designed from the ground up for Internet multiplay, and is thus "native" instead of merely "repurposed."
- *Quake II,* also from Activision, is one of the most famous of the mad mayhem games, rivaling the infamous

The Online Gaming Starter Kit, a book and CD-ROM by Ed Dille is available from Ventana Publishing.

Doom. It's game engine is also used in a similar Activision game, *Hexen II,* which presents richly detailed ancient and medieval settings in which to kill everything in sight.

- *Jedi Knight,* by LucasArts, is an RPG that pits the player, light saber in hand, against seven dark Jedi who are trying to exploit the power of the Dark Side. This is an opportunity for *Star Wars* fans to become Jedi masters.
- *Politika,* by Red Storm and based on the Tom Clancy novel, pits the player against factions like the Russian military, secret police and mafia. The player will learn much about real-world facts and data as he negotiates through the political intrigue of modern Russia.
- *F1 Racing Simulation,* Ubisoft's new racing sim, features 22 cars and 16 detailed race tracks. Eight players can scorch their tires as they vie for the check-

ered flag over the Internet.

Time To Get Started

What's the best way to get started in online gaming? Start slowly, on a game with simple rules, and practice against the computer until you're comfortable before venturing into a multiplayer world. The Online Gaming Starter Kit, available for about $30 from MacMillan Digital, is an inexpensive way to get started. It includes games such as *Chess, Bridge, Trivial Pursuit,* and *Microsoft Golf,* and allows the user to try online games and services for a free, trial period. For the more action-oriented, the same company also has the *Netwarrior* package for $30, which permits fans of *Quake, Duke Nukem* and *Diablo* to wage havoc via the Internet against opponents worldwide. This package has fully functioning editions of the famous *Air Warrior* aircraft sim, and offers hundreds of dollars of free online game play.

If you want to join a game network, consider the Concentric Network, a huge online gaming service that groups many smaller gaming networks together for billing convenience. It is available via www.gamegateway.com. Another such megaservice, The Arena from Earthlink Network, includes Kesmai and Engage Games Online, among others. It is reachable at www.earthlink.net/thearena/. Interactive Magic has started iMagic Online, a service with chat rooms and classic multiplayer games such as *WarBirds* (an aircraft sim) and *Planetary Raiders.* They are planning "lite" versions of detailed games such as *Raider Wars* and *Tank Wars.* They're at

There are a growing number of web sites devoted to online gaming, such as www.ten.net, www.icigames.com, www.vr1.com and www.mpath.com.

www.icigames.com. Mpath is one of the best-known gaming sites, with over 100,000 members. Their games include *iM1A2 Abrams* (one of the best combat tank games), *Monopoly* and *Star General.* They have virtual lobbies to lounge in and helpful tools to get started at www.mplayer.com. TEN (The Entertainment Network) is one of the largest and oldest of the gaming services. It's games include *Quake, Myth,* and *Shadow Warriors,* and offers helpful services for forming into teams, at www.ten.net. VR-1 offers *VR-1 Crossroads,* a *Dungeons and Dragons* (*D&D*) type game that requires cooperation and socializing between the players, making it an alternative to the slash-and-burn *Doom* genre, at www.vr1.com. Finally, the Internet Gaming Zone offers *Microsoft Fighter Ace,* one of the popular WWII flight sim games (gamers pre-fer the age before air-to-air missiles made combat "impersonal"), with many levels of play so newbies can feel comfortable, and *Asheron's Call,* a popular RPG that can support thousands of players at one time,

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A primary problem in online game play is keeping new players or "newbies" from being squashed by experienced, predatory "rogue" players.

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at www.zone.com.

If you are running these games on a PC, make sure you have a good accelerator card, such as the 3Dfx *Voodoo,* in order to avoid muddy graphics, and a good joystick controller, such as the *Thrustmaster Millennium 3D,* as many games will not work with just a mouse. Driving games are best played with steering wheel controls, and the *Thrustmaster Force Feedback Racing Wheel* is a joy to use for this, with instant feedback to your hands from cornering to acceleration or in case you hit another car.

Good luck, and enjoy gaming in cyberspace!

Christopher Harz is a multimedia consultant in online simulation and gaming. He helped develop the military's massive-scale online war games, and is now working on 3-D multiplayer web sites.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

Cartoons and Video Games: Let's Do Business

by Frédérique Doumic

Frédérique Doumic is MILIA's special consultant in collaborative ventures between animation producers and interactive gaming companies. At MIPCOM '97, she organized "Informal Encounters" which was designed specifically to promote joint projects between the two industries. Viewed as a great success, these discussions will be continued in Cannes at MILIA (The International Content Market For Interactive Media) from February 7-11, 1998. Lately, Frédérique has been in demand, but she took time out to answer her most frequently asked questions for *AWM*.

You organized meetings between cartoon and video game producers at the last MIPCOM. What form did these meetings take?

Space Circus, an action-adventure game produced by Infogrames, was a big hit among producers shopping for multimedia properties at MIPCOM '97. © Infogrames

These meetings, organized with the active support of the Reed Midem Organization, and more particularly the MILIA staff, consisted of ten private sessions between three major video game companies, Ubisoft, Infogrames and BMG Interactive; and cartoon producers, including Nelvana, Ellipse, EVA, Alliance, Pro Sieben, Cartoon and Mattel. The aim of these meetings was to find out whether these operators wanted to work together and if so, how.

Video game producers have become financially just as powerful as the senior players in the audiovisual field.

What struck the operators in both fields at these meetings?

The video game companies were struck by the degree of regulatory and editorial constraint imposed on producers of audiovisual materials, often independently of the wishes of the final consumer. As far as companies in the audiovisual field were concerned, they were impressed by the creativeness and modernity of the games presented at these meetings.

Will any agreements be finalized due to these meetings?

Two projects, *Space Circus*, an action-adventure game produced by Infogrames, and *Roberto*, an educational game initiated by BMG Interactive, were presented to the cartoon companies over the course of these meetings. Most of the cartoon producers were extremely interested in *Space Circus*. The game has a very powerful graphic world and plot framework. In addition, following the presentation of *Roberto,* a licensing contract is to be signed between BMG Interactive and a large Canadian producer. Ubisoft took a stand at MIPCOM and thus, presented its projects separately. The animation tests for *Rayman* and other Ubisoft properties also appear to have interested a considerable number of audiovisual producers and broadcasters.

In the direction of cartoon properties becoming video games or vice versa?

Only Ubisoft had come with licensing in and licensing out in mind. They made a number of interesting contacts with the idea of turning existing cartoons into games. But now there are video

game producers who have wanted to work in audiovisual for a long time. As far as cartoon producers are concerned, it is only recently that they have been attracted to the interactive field and I am afraid that video game companies do not necessarily need them so much now. Video games have made a lot of progress since the appearance of CD-ROMs and 32-bit consoles. They look increasingly like interactive cartoons and have more and more detailed plots. Video game producers have become financially just as powerful as the senior players in the audiovisual field.

Do video game companies want their products to be converted into cartoons, or do animation studios want their properties to be expanded into games?

We witnessed an embryonic test of strength on the subject of "which side will convert the other's products."

Which sector, cartoons or video games, has the most easily converted worlds?

I think that increasingly, we will see the video game worlds being exploited. These game worlds are creative and modern, with a captive public. Gaming is an area where authors can give free rein to their imagination. There is a lot less censorship of video games. The sole judge in the end is the customer, whose judgment is taken into
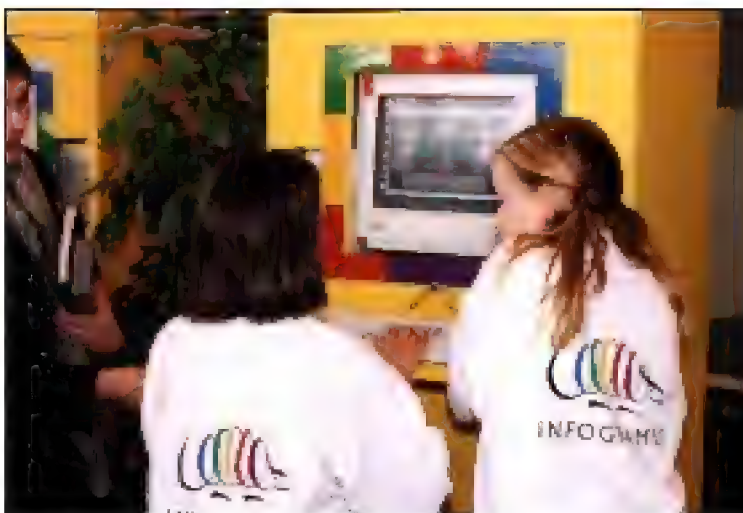
Kids playing Space Circus. Photo by Yves Coatsaliou. © Infogrames

account through tests carried out during the production process.

The key to success is the work carried out upstream, the creation of worlds designed from the very start for both medias.

Is licensing a good way for these two sectors to work together?

It must be acknowledged that licensing is rarely a success. The converted products are often rush jobs simply aimed at exploiting an existing property. As time goes by, consumers are becoming wary and some big licenses have been resounding flops.

In 1998, MILIA will invite companies to submit cartoon projects to be presented to a panel of video game producers. Photo by Yves Coatsaliou.

Are gaming and cartoon companies ready to work more closely than just selling one another licenses?

In my opinion, the key to success is the work carried out upstream, the creation of worlds designed from the very start for both medias. To my great delight, the MIPCOM meetings demonstrated that the companies in both sectors were interested in upstream collaboration. But appropriate collaborative structures still remain unestablished. The temptation for some gaming or cartoon companies is to do the job of the other sector on their own. Some major cartoon companies have already done so: Disney, Warner, Viacom, among others. Not always very successfully mind you. The success of video games largely depends on their gameplay. A good cartoon doesn't necessarily turn into a good game. It is perhaps easier to move from games to cartoons. The skill of storytelling is older and therefore, more widespread than the skills involved in properly programming video games. Some video game companies are in the process of setting up animation studios. They are already working with animators from 2-D and 3-D cartoons and with fiction scriptwriters to construct game worlds. Now they feel properly equipped to produce cartoons. However, not all game companies have taken this step

yet, and it is time that those operating in the cartoon sector set up partnerships with them.

What do video game companies need to have if they want to become successful animation producers?

They still need a "network" enabling them to agree to large (U.S. $10 million) financing plans quickly. However, they are fast learners! Some of them are successfully positioning themselves in the young adult cartoon market. At the last MIPCOM, Chaman, a new gaming and animation company created by Denis Friedman, the former chief executive of Psygnosis France, attracted Asian partners and video producers for the direct-to-video production of *Gaina*, a 52-minute cartoon adapted from a game which is still in production.

Which products are the easiest to convert?

> **Successful video games produce earnings that are ten, even a hundred, times the initial outlay.**

Only a limited number of projects in either sector exist in both media (one game in forty, according to Infogrames). Genuinely international-scale, action-adventure games and cartoons particularly lend themselves to this, but some products for specifically targeted groups such as young children and young adults also deserve to be mentioned.

Aren't the gaming worlds out of line with the requirements of cartoon broadcasters?

Some broadcasters appear to have reservations about distrib-

uting programs that are video game spin-offs because they think that video games in general are violent and stultifying. These are hasty judgments that need to be refined in terms of the particular projects in question. Likewise, some broadcasters do not like 3-D. Games are very often produced in full 3-D to give players greater freedom of movement. I think that children are now completely used to 3-D, and that what is needed to produce CGI cartoons is scriptwriters who can use the third dimension properly. Video game producers are, in my view, very well equipped to invent stories in three-dimensional worlds.

What is the main reason producers in the cartoon sector should make video games?

Video games are considerably more profitable than cartoons for companies in the cartoon sector, except where it is a question of worldwide merchandising rights. Successful video games produce earnings that are ten, even a hundred, times the initial outlay. Margins for cartoons, on the other hand, are often a percentage of the cost of production. But the risks associated with the games sector are somewhat frightening for producers of audiovisual materials. There are very few with large enough resources to carry the financial risks taken by gaming producers. On average, each game costs U.S. $2 million, and the risk of poor sales is virtually 100% of the cost of production, plus the cost of issuing it. That is why producers of audiovisual materials need to team up with specialists in the gaming field.

And from the point of view of video game companies?

For game companies, the distribution of a cartoon creates or reinforces a game's reputation and thus its profitability. It also makes it easier to get access to the mer-

> **On average, each game costs U.S. $2 million and the risk of poor sales is virtually 100% of the cost of production, plus the cost of issuing it.**

chandising market, a market to which games have virtually no access at the moment. As far as the risks associated with cartoon production are concerned, they are very limited compared with those of developing or manufacturing video games. That is why game companies are, in my view, in a better position to start producing audiovisual materials.

To what extent are game companies prepared to invest in cartoons?

At the MIPCOM meetings, the gaming companies expressed a wish to co-produce cartoons based on their games, at least to the extent of their rights. Video game producers are financially very powerful companies. In my view, some of them are quite capable of having a very ambitious investment strategy. What is more, Ubisoft intends to open animation studios in China for the production of cartoons based on its video games.

What are the main restraints on the production and distribution of combined video game/cartoon products?

There are still fairly major differences between the time it takes to put together, produce and distribute cartoons and video games.

It is therefore quite hard to synchronize game and cartoon releases. Even if they are designed at the same time, a cartoon will take at least one or two years longer than a game to come onto the market. However, there is a trend toward the production time of games lengthening and that of cartoons shortening.

Do you plan to extend these MIPCOM meetings through other actions?

My job is to establish collaborative ventures between these two worlds so I am working on it every day. What is more, in cooperation with Reed Midem, we are planning to organize a major cartoon/video game event to encourage the creation of partnerships between the two media forms [MILIA]. Shortly, we will be inviting companies to submit projects. We will then select about ten cartoon projects to be presented to a panel of video game producers and to the MILIA public under privileged conditions. The aim of this "exchange floor" is to help audiovisual producers find partners in the interactive field. We will likewise be organizing special meeting places for the two media. With the fifth edition of MILIA 1998 having the theme "Towards Convergence," it will be the ideal market for initiating partnerships of this type.

Frédérique Doumic.

MILIA, A Description

MILIA is the only international event dedicated to interactive media content regardless of the platform or technology. MILIA's aim is to bring together, over a five-day period, key decision-makers and professionals in the interactive media industry to buy and sell rights, form strategic alliances, develop online services, scout new talent and negotiate distribution agreements. This year's theme promises the right developments, as it connects online, gaming and multimedia professionals with the latest technologies and converging industries, such as television cable, satellite and telecoms. With all this in mind, MILIA is definitively the right place for the TV/PC convergence.

Frédérique Doumic is MILIA's special consultant in collaborative ventures between animation producers and interactive, gaming companies.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

Russia:
Gaming for Everybody

by Natalya Loukinykh

The recent boom in interest in interactive computer games reached Russia unexpectedly and quite triumphantly. Nowadays, Russians are playing computer games in their spare time, from their homes, offices and schools to everywhere in between.

Meanwhile, year after year, the Russian multimedia industry is increasing its production capacities and expanding its thematic, artistic and creative horizons.

Technology Explosion

Suddenly, all different types of computers, ranging from those equipped to handle diverse game applications, to the most old-fashioned home computers, to the utmost in technology like high quality Macintosh and Silicon Graphics systems, have become a normal detail in every day Russian life. While classic, traditional animation has become rare in our cinemas, computer animation, coming out of the industrial multimedia world, is becoming a recurrent attribute to Russia's contemporary virtual art.

Of course, a major part of the Russian multimedia market is games, and every kind of game application of foreign origin is used. Already popular are Russian periodicals dedicated to the computer industry, such as *Hard and Soft,*

Virtual Worlds and so on. These publications dedicate many of their beautifully designed and illustrated pages solely to gaming advertisements and propaganda. Demonstrations and visuals are also shown on special television programs which are targeted to both amateurs and computer specialists such as *Straight From The Horse's Mouth* (NTV Channel), *Computer!* (RTR TV channel) and *Virtual World* (Moscow TV-CENTER channel).

Challenges of Multimedia

Meanwhile, year after year, the Russian multimedia industry is increasing its production capacities and expanding its thematic, artistic and creative horizons. The analysis of the creative potential and the technical possibilities of Russian multimedia producers is part of the agenda of Moscow's yearly international 'Anigraph' festival of computer graphics and animation, which has been celebrated for five years. The prestigious metropolitan exhibition, 'Multimedia Expo' in the International Trade Center, also discusses such issues.

Naturally, this gives ground, and not willingly, for the comparison between other international industries and our own. According to many experts, Russian multimedia productions are lacking in many of the important components when compared to other international

Moscow-based multimedia firm, New Media Generation created Dr. Dudius on Earth, a CD-ROM game which takes kids on a journey around the world. © NMG.

products. However, they agree that we have a legal right to compete in the marketplace, and we should not be ashamed of our imperfections.

However, the interactive games industry is an increasingly attractive and productive field for Russian programmers and animators.

According to information gathered at the latest conferences and festivals of multimedia production, Russian computer games or game applications, suffer from either an amateur graphic element performance while having a very decently made program, or, vice versa, lack a good technical program performance, while the work by the graphic artists is excellent.

It is very sad to mention that the majority of evident insufficiencies in Russian multimedia production are due to a real lack of tech-

nical possibilities and material means. Very few Russian producers can gather a highly qualified and multifunctional staff, and sometimes it is impossible to obtain the legal rights to use materials such as video, text, graphics or music. The best, internationally known foreign multimedia productions are backed-up, as a rule, by such prominent companies as Disney, the BBC, Microsoft, etc. Many interactive games, animation and other instructive multimedia programs in Western countries traditionally follow in the footsteps of high-rated Hollywood films and television programs. Russian colleagues can only dream of creating their own analog multimedia versions of popular local television programs or favorite films such as *Plasticine Raven* by Alexander Tatarski or Fedor Khitruk's *Winnie the Pooh.*

According to many experts, Russian multimedia productions are lacking in many of the important components when compared to other international products.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding all the evident and inevitable restraints the Russian multimedia industry faces, the field's home novelties are delighting to the eyes and spirit of professionals and the incessantly increasing number of end users.

The Progress of R-Style

Widely known and accumulating production power, the Russian company R-Style is gathering the activity of various multimedia production companies together, and is actively amplifying the field

Pinnochio, a CD-ROM adaptation of the classic tale by New Media Generation. © NMG.

and quality of its productions. Let us concentrate our attention on this company's activities. R-Style proposes to Russian and foreign end-users powerful computers that they create, packaged together with several kits of multimedia products such as video game applications, entertainment and education programs as well as, of course, the newest games on cartridges and CDs

There are almost two dozen interactive cartoon films and computer games in R-Style's package. They are created by the programmers at the Russian companies, New Media Generation and Cyril and Methodius, who work together with famous Russian animation artists. One can find among these products different types of CD-ROM encyclopedias on everything from cuisine to the Bible, but predominately R-Style presents a rich collection of animated computer games and interactive animation films.

R-Style's interactive multimedia versions of animated films are recorded on CD-ROM, and allow the famous literary plots to be easily stopped and the player to actively participate in choosing the steps or the movement of the characters, playing versions of famous scenes and finding all kinds of surprises. In the series of interactive films, *The Magic Stories of Tootie,* one can find

the following titles: *Cinderella, Pinocchio, The Thumbelins, Beauty and the Beast, Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves, Sinbad the Sailor, The Snow Queen,* as well as some original computer games such as, *Sea Legends, Escape from the Haunted House, Alice in Wonderland, The Tower of Knowledge, Dr. Dudius on Earth* and others which are constantly enriching R-Style's assortment.

Animating Across Media

I am glad to report that not only literary professionals participate in the creation of multimedia games and interactive versions of animated films, but also truly well-known animators who have been awarded at many international festivals work in this field. R-Style is creating interactive animated films with the talents of the celebrated young animators from Moscow: Dmitri Reztchikov and Alexander Ratnovsky. Their modern animation shorts *Acid Wine* and *The Voices* have been shown extensively on the animation festival circuit.

We can also note that R-Style's animation production branch can compete with the studio that is managed by the President of the Russian Association of Animators, the Dmitri Naumov Studio. Naumov's long-standing partner, the
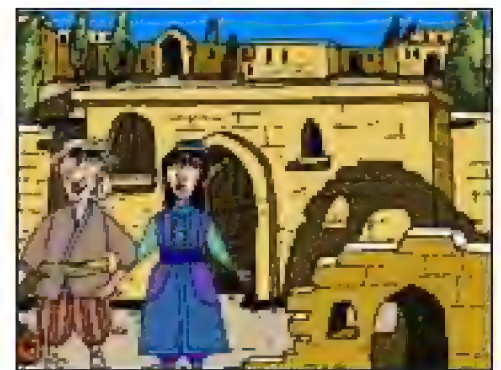
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. © NMG.

artist, scriptwriter and co-producer Valentin Teleguine, is also part of their staff. Their plasticine and cut-out films are widely known in international and professional circles. *About Mathvey Kuzmich* was awarded by the international animation film festival KROK '91, and Kafka's *Landsurveyor's Castle* won the Silver Dove Award at the Leipzig '95 International Festival and was nominated to NIKA's Russian Best Film.

The famous animation producer Alexei Karaev of Svredlovskaya Anima Studio is also participating in Dmitri Naumov Studio's multimedia projects. His films *Welcome!, The Habitants of the Old House* and *As You Like it* have been awarded at many international festivals.

Many new and young animators from Bielorussia, Ukraine and other former Soviet republics are joining the multimedia industry as well. Of course, the animation masters' artistic level of self-realization while working in the multimedia industry is incomparable to their work using traditional animation techniques and forms. The fact, however, that the masters of animation participate in the creation and industry of Russian multimedia, is adding a level of art to the entire home multimedia area and to interactive animation in particular. Of course, one would like to hope the artists and the animation producers' activity in this field of artistic creation doesn't represent the only way of realization in the modern market situation. Also, one would like to hope the public and the jury of future professional animation festivals would like to see on the big screen the most recent films of all the mentioned Russian animators

who are working in the multimedia industry.

Other Companies Forge Ahead

However, the interactive games industry is an increasingly attractive and productive field for Russian programmers and animators. And, of course, R-Style isn't the only company in which one can participate in multimedia production.

Moscow's Pilot Studio and Second Frog are production groups which are well-known to both Russian and foreign animation film fans. They too are producing games under the leadership of Alexander Tatarski. Pilot Media, partnering with game companies such as L-S and Games, is successfully entering multimedia production and the field of interactive games. Pilot's characters are already 'playing roles' and live in a whole set of CD-ROMs.

> **The fact that the masters of animation participate in the creation of Russian multimedia, is adding a level of art to the entire home multimedia area**

Also, the Nikita Company has been placing on the market for several years sets of multimedia developmental computer games for children under the name of *Erudit* and *Wonderkind.* The majority of their interactive games are made for children older than 10 but of a basic school age, and are directly connected to general education secondary schools, gymnasiums and college programs. Some of their titles are: *Anatomic,* a game-course of anatomy; *Journey to Europe,* a geography game, *Vira,* a game

related to geometry rules and the metric and weight system, and *Gavrila,* a game which uses crosswords to foster logical thinking in children.

The multimedia industry and interactive animation in Russia is in a most inspiring and creative stage of development. This modern and fashionable field, is constantly being joined by more and more new forces with creative ideas. However, our producers need a direction, and opportunities to maximize the entire production process. Meanwhile, this new technology needs to become less expensive so that the majority of our population can benefit from it.
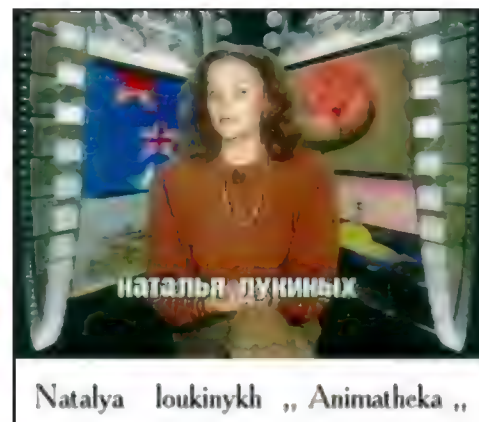
Natalya Loukinykh.

Natalya Loukinykh, author and TV producer, graduated from the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University. Since 1991 she has worked with the organizing group of the KROK International Animation Festival, as press-attache and film selector. She is also director of Animatheka, a documentary TV program about animation.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

1997 Gaming Report:
The Best of the Bunch

by Wendy Jackson

This holiday season, a deluge of new game titles are being released. The Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA) has compiled data from the NPD Group's Interactive Entertainment Software Service, to report that sales of video game and PC entertainment software this year have topped $1.5 billion (January through September); already a 35 percent increase over 1996. With more than 50 percent of total industry sales usually taking place in the fourth quarter (holiday season), those numbers are expected to increase dramatically by the end of 1997. IDSA President Douglas Lowenstein said, "All signals are now pointing to total entertainment software sales breaking the $5 billion barrier." While this estimate does lean toward the optimistic, there is no question that games are increasing in popularity as more home users purchase personal computers and gaming consoles.

> "All signals are now pointing to total entertainment software sales breaking the $5 billion barrier." - IDSA President Douglas Lowenstein
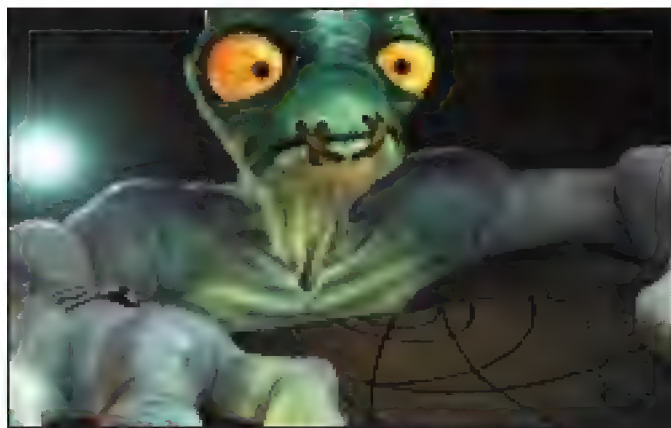
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee. © Oddworld Inhabitants

From Screen to Machine

Many titles being released this season hope to cash in on the success of existing animated properties. Fox Interactive is following the tried-and-true Disney formula with their *Anastasia* tie-in release, a "storybook" style game called *Anastasia: Adventures With Pooka and Bartok*. THQ's PlayStation action game, *Ghost in the Shell* is based on the popular Japanese manga comic and anime feature film. Funnybone Interactive is releasing *Animaniacs Game Pack*, a collection of arcade-style games starring characters from Warner Bros.' animated television series. Broderbund's Living Books division has released *Arthur's Birthday*, another title in the *Arthur* line, which started as a collection of children's books and became a hit animated series from Cinar Films and WGBH Boston. Creative Capers' original property, *Nightmare Ned* was simultaneously developed as a game and an animated series with Disney.

With so many games to choose from, how is an animation fan to make sense of them all?

With so many games to choose from, how is an animation fan to make sense of them all? In preparation for our annual gaming issue, *Animation World Magazine* looked at more than 50 interactive games that have been released throughout the year. One thing we learned is that you can't judge a game by its cover. Actual game graphics often pale in comparison to the pictures on packaging and advertisements. When reviewing all titles, we looked mainly at the qual-

Parappa the Rapper. © Sony Computer Entertainment
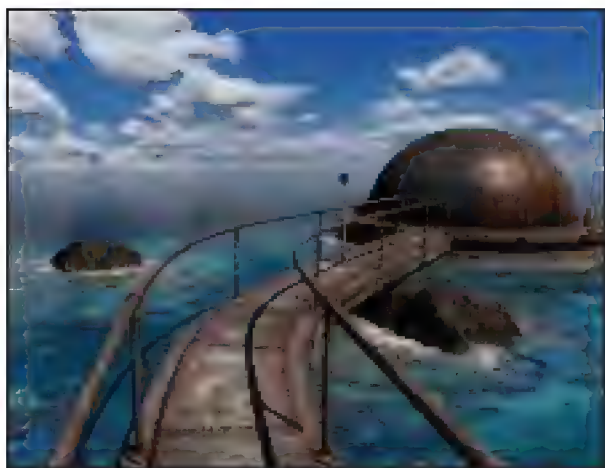
Riven. © Cyan.

ity of the animation within the game, as well as the gameplay and story.

The Best of the Bunch

1. *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee*
This outstandingly original adventure, features some of the best graphics and animation we've ever seen in a game. *Abe's Oddysee* is the first title in "The Oddworld Quintology," a five-part series designed and created by Oddworld Inhabitants, an innovative, young game design firm based in Northern California. With its sophisticated gameplay, this game is meant to be played over a long period of time, so be sure to have a memory card installed.
System: PlayStation
Publisher: GT Interactive

2. *Parappa the Rapper*
The latest and greatest inter-
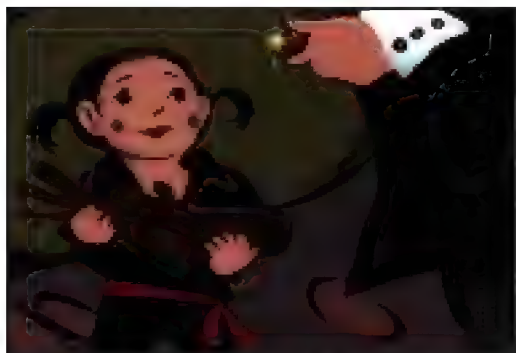
Zero Zero © Nicholson NY.

active creation designed by Rodney Greenblat, a New York-based artist who has been creating offbeat computer games, such as *Dazzeloids,* since the early days of interactive animation. Parappa, which means "paper thin" in Japanese, describes the game's cartoony 2-D characters which move in a 3-D world. In addition to this innovative animation technique, *Parappa the Rapper* features a funky musical score by Masaya Matsuura. This is a game that's sure to be imitated.
System: PlayStation
Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

3. *Riven*
The anticipated sequel to *Myst,* the best-selling CD-ROM game in history, was well worth the wait. More of a free-form "exploratory experience" than a game, *Riven* takes users on a journey through a fantasy world of highly realistic 3-D graphics. Animation is used minimally, but to stunning effect, with incredibly smooth movement.
System: Windows/Macintosh
Publisher: Red Orb Entertainment (a division of Broderbund)

4. *Zero Zero*
Theresa Duncan, creator of *Chop Suey* and *Smarty Pants,* has designed another gem that kids may not even suspect is educational. Described as a "fairy tale for the future," *Zero Zero* depicts a spunky, young mademoiselle on her adventures in Paris during the turn of the century (1900, hence her name, "Zero Zero"). Limited, but charming 2-D animation by

Interstate 76. © Activision.

Jeremy Blake brings this lyrical story to life.
System: Windows or Macintosh
Publisher: Nicholson NY

5. *Interstate 76*
Quentin Tarantino meets *The Dukes of Hazard* in this "retro-action" game. 3-D characters and their souped-up cars speed through the desert in search of revenge against outlaws. The entire game, including backgrounds, is rendered in 3-D animation, and can be viewed from multiple angles at any time.
System: Windows
Publisher: Activision

6. *Koala Lumpur: Journey to the Edge*
Developed by San Francisco-based (Colossal) Pictures, from an original concept by director Jamie Baker, this funny mystery game features 2-D character animation that rivals some Saturday morning cartoons. The fact that the animation
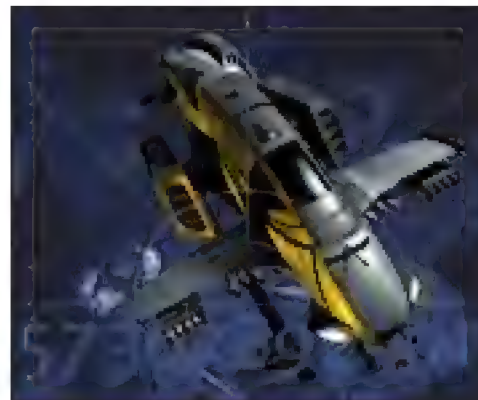
G-Police. © Psygnosis.

was created traditionally, with drawings on paper, is a refreshing testament to doing things the "old fashioned way."
System: Windows
Publisher: Broderbund
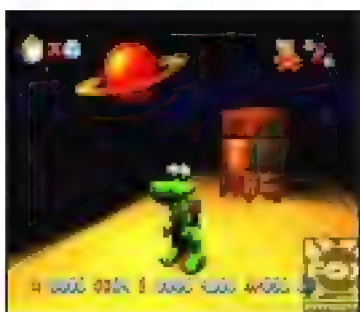
Croc. © Fox Interactive

7. *G-Police*

This space flight simulator shoot 'em up game is set in a futuristic world inspired by *Blade Runner.* The intros feature some incredibly realistic 3-D animation of virtual humans, setting the story for the rest of the game. While the gameplay animation is not as finely rendered as the intros, it does feature detailed 3-D graphics in a full 360 degree environment.
System: PlayStation
Publisher: Psygnosis

8. *Nickelodeon 3D Movie Maker*

This creative title gives Nicktoons fans a shot at creating their own cartoons, with characters from *Ren & Stimpy, Aaahh!!! Real Monsters* and *Rocko's Modern Life.* The difference is that these characters are rendered in 3-D computer graphics, and can do things that even the shows' creators might have never dreamed up. A menu of settings, props, actions and sounds, keep this title interesting long after many other games might have worn out.
System: Windows
Publisher: Microsoft

One thing we learned is that you can't judge a game by its cover.

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9. *Croc: Legend of the Gobbos*

A cute fantasy game, with great character design and refreshingly non-violent action. Developed by Argonaut Software, *Croc* features full 3-D character animation and environments, explored through the eyes of a roly-poly crocodile whose mission is to save the threatened civilization of the Gobbos.
System: PlayStation

Publisher: Fox Interactive

10. *Nightmare Creatures*

With an NC-17 rating and enough blood to make the average person squeamish, this game is part if the "not for fans of the animated storybook" genre. While the violence may not be for everyone, the game does feature fluid 3-D animation and complex rendered environments. In particular, it is the addition of mood-setting, animated, atmospheric effects such as fog and falling leaves that caught our attention.
System: PlayStation
Publisher: Activision

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World *Magazine.*

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

The Future of Gaming

a survey compiled by Heather Kenyon

What does the future of gaming hold? We asked five gaming honchos to reflect on the types of games we will be playing in the future.

Douglas Lowenstein, Steve Dauterman, Scott Miller, Lorne Lanning and Mark Rowland answered the following questions:

- What is the next large technological step that will be taken and how will that influence the gaming industry?
- What do you think gaming (that features interactive animation) will be like in the future?

Douglas Lowenstein also explained current gaming trends that are sure to continue and influence the upcoming years.

Douglas Lowenstein, President of the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA)

Heather Kenyon: What is the next large technological step that will be taken and how will this influence the gaming industry?

Douglas Lowenstein: That is a really tough question to answer. We are just at the beginning of the technology curve for 3-D applications. On the console side, I think what you're seeing, and what you will continue to see, is less of a tech-

nology breakthrough in the next year or two, because if you follow the industry, you know that this is an industry where technology advances usually occur every three or four years, with the introduction of new hardware. Hardware, obviously is [already] on the market for the next generation, and it has been there for a couple of years now. What tends to happen is the sophistication of the programmers grows by leaps and bounds each year as they have more depth at maximizing the capability of the hardware. It's less a question of any new technological development than it is a question of the new direction that the programmers can take the hardware."

HK: That's going to push people to be a lot more creative when producing games.

DL: Absolutely.

HK: They will need to be in order to keep consumers satisfied?

DL: This is an industry where the end user is an extremely sophisticated buyer, and has extremely high standards. Programmers, developers, animators, everybody involved in the creation of a product is constantly looking to push the creative boundaries to meet the demand of the consumer. It's not simply a ques-

tion of how the game looks, which is certainly important, but the quality of the animation, the quality of the sound. All of these things are part of the overall game experience. More than anything else, what determines whether the game has a market is the quality of the gameplay.

HK: Now can I have you look five, ten years in the future... What do you think games will be like? Do you think they'll be predominately the same, just more sophisticated? Or, do you think virtual reality will really be here?

DL: I'm not as much a believer in virtual reality as I am a believer in advances in the use of artificial intelligence. I think certainly visually, graphically and otherwise we will, five years out, be looking at machines that are more powerful, faster, with all kinds of bells and whistles that create a visual experience even more stunning and realistic than what we have today. Beyond that, I think that the next great leap forward is in the area of artificial intelligence; the creation of products where users are interacting in almost human-like ways with the characters. That's the area for tremendous technological growth.

There are games out there today that are artificially intelligent, a lot of the product out there relies on the basics of artificial intelligence to describe the gameplay. It's a question of where that technology goes, so that there's a development of

characters and personality within the games that are having interactions with the user. This is several steps beyond the kinds of interactions that occur now.

HK: What are the major trends you see today in the industry?

> **"The next great leap forward is in the area of artificial intelligence; the creation of products where users are interacting in almost human-like ways with the characters." - Douglas Lowenstein**

DL: Well, I think that there are several that are noteworthy, that are not so much technology-oriented as they are business-oriented trends. I would say first is the continuing consolidation in the marketplace. As we are in this almost ironic environment now where we are projecting significant growth in the size of the market, at the same time that we are expecting the number of software publishers servicing the market to shrink. I think that's fairly consistent with a maturing industry. It's not surprising, but it is an important business trend that will have an impact on the shape and profile of the business six months from now, and a year from now, let alone five years from now.

Another very significant business trend is the expansion of international markets. We are part of a global business today, more so than ever before. Companies in the United States are generating 50-60% or more of their revenue from foreign markets. Increasingly, they are recognizing that in both the design of products and the marketing of products, they need to think global. I think that's another important trend that will continue.

A third trend, that's profoundly important and gets right to the bottom line, is the explosion of video game consoles. The next generation machines, we are projecting they will be up from 6 million at year-end 1996 to somewhere in the neighborhood of 16 million by year-end 1997, with every reason to believe that number will grow up to as much as 30 million or more by year-end 1998. Which means that we'll be looking at next-generation video game consoles being in 30-40% of U.S. households, which is getting pretty close to mass-market penetration. That kind of growth, obviously, will power the software side of the business. It means money flowing into the business, more R&D money, a rather historic trend. On the PC side, we are also looking at projections of continued growth install bases of high-end multimedia computers. That too will have a positive effect on the PC games market.

One of the great challenges of the industry continues to be to broaden the market to a more mass-market base of users, beyond the hard-core gamers. And that's starting to happen. We see growing evidence that girls are coming into the market more actively, and in fact, product being very specifically targeted at them. We see well over half of the console market now being made up by people over the age of 18, and over 75% of the PC games market made up of people over the age of 18. These are trends that we think are very positive, very important, in terms of broadening and deepening the user base.

In terms of the other types of products that are showing increased popularity, we certainly have some interesting changes in terms of the types of products consumers are using. This further reflects a broadening of the market, to the extent that strategy and trivia games are capturing a larger market share. I suggest that the user base is older than it has historically been. The younger users have gravitated most heavily towards the twitch, fast action games. I think perhaps the most important trend to watch in this business is what happens with online games. I think that's the $64,000 [big] question. Certainly that segment has potential to alter dramatically the face of this business. It's like the wild west right now. There are a lot of sheriffs in town (laughs).

One other thing I'd like to mention... About a year ago, The IDSA created the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences. It is an academy of individuals, a separate board, not run by the IDSA, focused on creating a community of the creative segment of the business. It'll be doing its first awards event next year. We believe it will be for our industry, what the other academies are for the other entertainment industries. Within the Academy are a whole series of separate peer groups for the various craft forms. For example, we expect eventually to have a peer group that is focused on animation, and have special awards chosen by people involved in interactive animation, as to the best products and achievements in that segment of the industry.

Steve Dauterman, Director of Development, LucasArts
"The biggest technical advance will be the widespread use of accelerated 3-D graphics hardware that is now available for a reasonable price to the home user. These cards are allowing us to make games with real-time 3-D graphics that are becoming more and more

Steve Dauterman, Director of Development for LucasArts.

realistic. In the next couple of years, there will be machines with this hardware built-in, plus processor speeds exceeding 400mhz. This type of hardware is allowing us to make huge leaps in what the gamer will see on screen.

"The biggest technical advance will be the widespread use of accelerated 3D graphics hardware that is now available for a reasonable price to the home user." - Steve Dauterman

"I think gamers can expect more and more realistic animation of 3-D characters. With better motion capture techniques starting to be implemented, we will be able to capture thousands of animations rather than just a few hundred that we currently see in most games. Combining this with better artificial intelligence, you will see characters responding and "animating" to specific situations within gameplay. With games like *Jedi Knight*, we have just scratched the surface on what we can do with real-time animation."

Scott Miller, Head of Apogee

Software, Ltd.

"I think the next large step is currently happening, and that's the revolutionary advancement being brought about by specific 3-D graphics hardware. If it weren't for this advancement, it would be several years before raw CPU power would allow us to see the advancements in graphics now being seen in games. I think that in a year or two we'll see more than just games use this hardware, we'll see the web (and browsers), Java applications, educational products and other non-gaming products use 3-D hardware to enhance their interaction, appearance and usefulness.

"Five years ago, the computer power we now have on our desk was not predicted to be around until 2002. A new PC now has more power than all the combined computers in Silicon Valley 20 years ago. Obviously, as computing power increases, we'll be able to add more realism and detail to environments, characters and their animations. It's probably only a few years away before we can do the animations seen in *Toy Story* and *Jurassic Park* in real-time. That's exciting to think about."

Lorne Lanning, President of Oddworld Inhabitants

"The next level console systems (such as the SEGA DORAL or 600mhz PCs) will allow us to make something really important take place. What will happen is that your individual personality will begin to reflect in the characters you control. This will occur because you will have so many more abilities for basic communication and interactions with the other inhabitants within the virtual world. The co-

inhabitants will become much more lifelike in terms of their emotional instabilities and basic attitude responses. The combined increases in character communication, character intelligence, character awareness and dysfunctional character traits, are what will take the gaming experience to new heights. The emotional character will, if designed and executed properly, suck in the gameplayer's emotional attention. These types of qualities are largely non-existent in today's industry and yet these are what we see as the next and most important steps. Once this kind of stuff is experienced, the player will never look back.

"It's probably only a few years away before we can do the animations seen in *Toy Story* and *Jurassic Park* in real-time." - Scott Miller

"Future gaming is about controlling what will appear to be actual living life forms, not just pieces of animated artwork like we do today. The evolved character will exist within situations and dilemmas that you will grow to care about and even hate. Games will feel much more personal and you will feel much more responsible for the characters within the experience. Whether you are murdering them, helping them, goofing around with them, or having sex with them, you will be seduced by the character's charm in the same way that we have been seduced by the charm of performers for thousands of years.
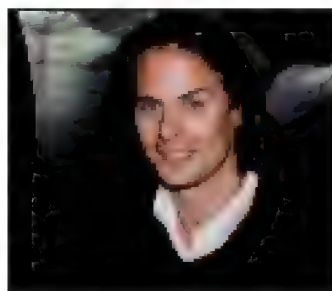
Lorne Lanning.

"Video games today are the

metaphorical equivalent to the 1920s peep show. As the peep show grew up and became the major motion picture, so shall the video game grow to become an experience unlike anything ever encountered. We will be free from the moral constraints of the real world, yet feel our actions explode around us in surround sound. The experience will feel more and more like real life as we plunge deeper and deeper into the fantastic. Give us 20 years, and the tastebuds of our mind will grow accustomed to the amplified virtual experience and the rush that accompanies it. Then, just as we love Super Nacho Doritos but spit out the all natural corn chip, we will reject the blandness of the real world."

A screen shot from one of U.K.-based Total Control Media's animated games which is played interactively through a television. ©Total Control Media.

Mark Rowland, Director/Owner, Total Control Media

"Our games to date have been produced for television and are therefore restricted to one, two or a maximum of four players. Any more and it becomes unwatchable to the millions who would soon switch over or off.

"By delivering to the broadcaster and audience something unique - a 3-D adventure with a combination of game play, speed and video quality that cannot be delivered on home based systems - Total Control Media (TCM) has been able to lead the world in children's interactive games.

"The future is digital. Digital broadcasters will be able to offer the next stage of television-delivered interactive games that will allow thousands of individuals to play games at our quality at the same time, either against themselves or others and not just in their country of origin but around the world.

> **"Give us 20 years, and the tastebuds of our mind will grow accustomed to the amplified virtual experience and the rush that accompanies it." - Lorne Lanning**

"TCM has already developed and tested fully automatic programming using 3-D Real Time Presenters, pre-produced and scripted who control interaction 24 hours a day. The programs are easily updated to keep them fresh, giving the appearance of being live, without the usual costs associated with live television.

"The next stage is under development with technology devised by TCM, virtually complete that will allow home interactivity on a massive scale using our automatic system and programming via any set top box."

Heather Kenyon is Editor-in-Chief of Animation World Magazine.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

A Conversation With Piotr Dumala and Jerzy Kucia

September 11, 1997 Fantoche Animation Festival, Baden, Switzerland

by Melissa Chimovitz

If one were asked to characterize Polish animation, it would be a true challenge to identify in words that slippery thing that makes Polish films so distinctively Polish. Perhaps this is because the only thing that all animators of that origin have in common (besides their nationality) is the singularity of their own vision and the integrity of their individual styles. Or perhaps it is because to try to describe in words the work of many Polish animators would be a misdeed, since feelings, not words, are many of these artists' primary motivation.

Certainly this is the case for two contemporary animators, Jerzy Kucia and Piotr Dumala. Although vastly different in both their stylistic and thematic approaches to animation, these filmmakers do share that nearly unnamable attribute that creates a mood and an atmosphere unique to Polish animation.

Profile: Jerzy Kucia

Jerzy Kucia (b.1942) was trained as a painter and graphic artist at the Krakow Academy of Fine Arts, where he is currently a professor and the head of the animation department. His first animated film, *Return,* was completed in 1972, and demonstrates beautifully Kucia's
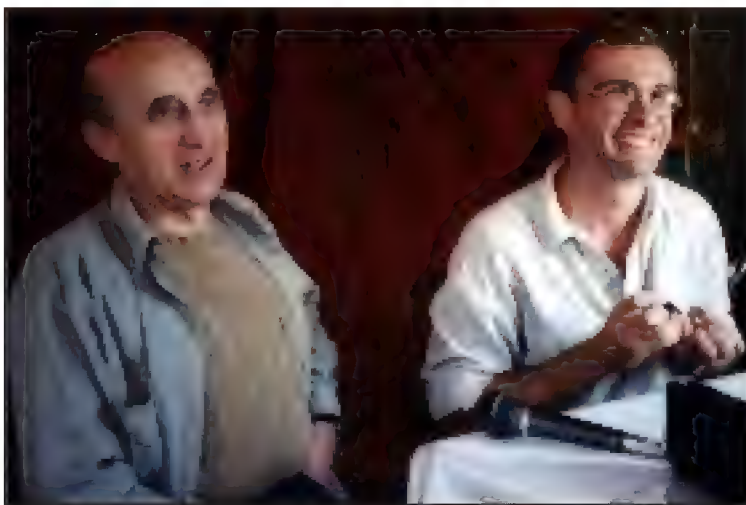
Jerzy Kucia, left, and Piotr Dumala, right. Photo by Ron Diamond. © Animation World Network.

interest in the interplay between reality, memory, dream, and emotion. In *Return,* although we are observing a rather static, uneventful moment in one man's life (throughout most of the film, we watch him looking out the window of a train as a country landscape rushes by), it is clear that the real action is taking place within the man's (and our own) mental landscape. The regular and rhythmic sound of the moving train, together with the hypnotic night-time scenery sweeping by, enables the viewer to slip into his or her own dreamlike journey.

In the 25 years since his first film, Kucia has revisited this motif and perfected his unique visual language in eight more films, all but one of which utilize a very similar abstract structure to present their themes. The one exception is *Reflections* (1979), which is Kucia's only film to date that attempts to

follow a narrative in the classic sense. *Reflections,* also about a journey of sorts, follows the laborious struggle of an insect hatching from its cocoon. No sooner than the insect wrests itself from its shell does it become involved in a life struggle with another insect. The drama ends abruptly when both bugs are crushed under a man's shoe. Bleak though the message may be, Kucia manages to draw us once again into a singular, almost microscopic moment of time that is at once dreamlike and poetic, yet grounded in grim reality.

Kucia's most recent film, *Across the Field* (1992), is his longest and arguably his most complex film in terms of imagery. In it, he applies many of the various techniques he has developed for his films over the years, the result being a rich collage of drawing, photographic images, and live-action film footage whose individual frames he has manipulated. This complex technique exists, according to Kucia, only as a vehicle to evoke the mood and emotion he wishes the audience to experience. This Impressionist approach to filmmaking is no doubt what inspired Marcin Gizycki to dub Kucia the "Bresson of Polish animated film."

Jerzy Kucia's first film, Return. © Jerzy Kucia.

Profile: Piotr Dumala

The films of Piotr Dumala, though much more straightforward in their approach to storytelling than Kucia's, also leave the audience with a strong sense of mood and emotion. Even his more comic films, like *Little Black Riding Hood* (a twisted adaptation of the classic fairy tale in which the display of bloodlust on the part of the protagonist and a brief moment of inter-species copulation make it worthy of an R rating) leave the viewer with a sense that there is something dark and unexplainable within human nature.

Here once again the artist's unique technical developments are responsible for the films' evocative mood. Like Kucia, Dumala works primarily in black and white. Oddly,

Jerzy Kucia's Reflections. © Jerzy Kucia.

he stumbled upon his animation technique while studying sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. While working with plaster in his studio, he found that if he painted and then scratched into a block of plaster with sharp tools, he had a surface that he could add to and subtract from to make his drawings appear to move under the camera. The mood of Dumala's films can vary according to the quality of his mark-making; his line quality ranges from high-contrast, bold, scratchy and energetic to soft, dreamlike, and rendered.

> **"After a few months I noticed that I needed movement to talk about reality, to talk about my friends, about my situation in Poland." - Jerzy Kucia**

Although Dumala claims that his films are not political, two of his early films, *Lycantrophy* and *Walls* stand out as profound commentary on life in a totalitarian environment. In *Walls*, a tiny man trapped and routinely observed within a small box responds to his situation at first with fear, madness, and finally lethargy.

Lycantrophy opens with a pack of hungry wolves chasing a man across a barren landscape. After catching and devouring him, the pack rests contentedly until one of the wolves pulls off his head to reveal that he is a man in a wolf suit. The pack, eyeing him hungrily, turns against him and he soon meets the same fate as the original man. This cycle continues until

it is evident that all of the wolves are really men in wolf suits, a clever way of presenting the innate contradictions and dangers of a totalitarian system.

Dumala's more recent work borrows from the surreal and fantastic elements of 20th century Eastern European literature. *Freedom of the Leg* and *Franz Kafka* are very much influenced by the writings of Nikolai Gogol and, of course, Franz Kafka. Currently, though, Dumala is at work adapting a piece from his favorite author, Dostoyevsky. *Crime and Punishment*, his most ambitious project yet, will no doubt incorporate the poetic imagery and evocative mood that Dumala has mastered in his previous work.

A Meeting of the Minds

Piotr Dumala and Jerzy Kucia met and became friends many years ago at an international animation festival, but say that despite the fact that they live in the same country, they only see each other at the festivals. At September's Fantoche Animation Festival in Baden, Switzerland, where both of their complete works were being shown in a retrospective, I had the distinct honor of meeting them and interviewing them together for the first time. Joining us for a light lunch and heavy questions were Fantoche director oTTo Alder and Ron Diamond of *Animation World Magazine*.

> **"I must destroy every frame to put in its place another one, the next one, to have movement." - Piotr Dumala**

Melissa Chimovitz: I have decided that because this interview is not only an interview, but a meal as

well, that we would have a light course of questions to start - the 'appetizer' questions, then move on to the meatier, main course-kind of questions...

Piotr Dumala: Maybe some drinks, after?

MC: Sure. Some *digestif* questions, perhaps? We'll see... You have both found your way to animation through different media. Piotr, you have a sculpture background, and Jerzy, you were a graphic artist and a painter. I'm wondering what led you to animation? Jerzy, you have even said that you are a filmmaker "by chance..."

Jerzy Kucia: Yes, it really was by chance. I didn't want to be a filmmaker. I wanted to be a painter, and I studied as a painter and a graphic artist. I made a short [film] exercise when I was a student, and I thought that it was not for me. After a few months I noticed that I needed movement to talk about reality, to talk about my friends, about my situation in Poland. It was easier to talk about reality using movement. So it was by chance in that way that I became a filmmaker.

PD: In my case it was a bit different because I think I always wanted to make animation from the first time I saw some film on the TV. I was a kid, and I loved it from the first moment.

MC: Do you remember what it was?

PD: I don't remember. It was probably Disney, but I loved just films in

Piotr Dumala's *Franz Kafka*. © Piotr Dumala.

general, not only animation. The second thing that was important was that I always liked to tell stories. So for me, animation is my way to tell stories, with drawings and movement together.

MC: What can animation accomplish that these other mediums that you've already worked in cannot?

PD: There is a magical moment when you see your work in movement. You expect something, but you are not able to predict everything. When I see my film on the screen for the first time, there is always something that surprises me, and I very much like it.

> **"We need more markets, but in markets, not in market-like film festivals." - Jerzy Kucia**

MC: Even now, after you've been making films for 15 years?

PD: Yes, even more than before, in a different way, but it's a very strong feeling when I see it.

JK: The animation process is important because I can create everything. My inspiration is from reality, but it is the process of creation that is for me very important now. Maybe not in the future, maybe not in the past, but at this moment, it's very important.

oTTo Alder: Jerzy, do you understand yourself as an animation artist, or do you think of your work as filmmaking, that it's more than animation?

JK: It is the same. I don't see the difference between film and animation. It is a problem only of what elements I will choose to use.

PD: For me, I know that there is something I want to show. It doesn't matter which way I do it. But animation is the best way to show my private, interior world. It is the way to discover my dreams, my desire, all my feelings. I can show this through animation because it is connected with drawing. I have no idea about using a live-action camera, so my way of telling stories is to create everything, like Jerzy said. I like also this moment of [total] creation. With animation, this is possible.

OA: Do you see a pure technical difference between live-action, video, or documentary on one side and animation on the other? Because if you shoot a documentary or a live-action, you shoot with 24 frames per second, but if you are an animator, you have access to every sin-

gle frame. You have power over the single frame, and the material you use and the technique you use - it's different from reality . Filmmaking, this 24 frames per second, it's a totally different technique.

JK: Yes, I agree with you. I see the difference between animation, live-action, and documentary, but when I am making an animated film or a documentary, I am a filmmaker too. But I see a big difference, of course.

PD: But in a way, you are closer to documentary film than I am. You use in your animation real things, real sequences -

JK: Maybe this is so, but I think that is just a characteristic of my work. It's documentary sometimes, and it's animation sometimes.

PD: In my case, also, I can say it's documentary, but documentary of my interior.

MC: How does it feel to see all of your films in retrospective? Does it cause you to reflect on the changes that have taken place in your work from your first film to the present?

JK: I don't like to see my retrospective! From time to time, when I look at the films, I would like to change everything. During the projection, I am even thinking about how to change the soundtrack! It is not interesting to see my films again. Maybe it is more interesting for [the audience], but not for me. Right now, I am preparing a new film, so I am thinking about the new film, not the last film.

PD: It depends upon my mood. Sometimes I see my films again and again, not because of a retrospective, but because I show it to my friends at home, etc. In those cases, I don't like it very much. I feel a bit ashamed. But it's different when I see them with a big group of people, because I feel how people can appreciate [the films], what feelings they cause. I like to feel again that

Piotr Dumala's Freedom of the Leg. © Piotr Dumala.

these films are still alive, that they have some energy. Also, I am very concentrated on the past: my past and the past in general. So, it's interesting for me to see the whole process - the whole 15 years since I started doing animation as one whole passage, and to see how I've changed.

MC: Do the changes in your filmmaking correspond to the changes in Poland? The social changes and political changes?

JK: Yes, for me that was very important. It was changing reality. I was talking about common life. It is my basic problem. My basic problem isn't fashion or style, only reality. And I had this problem last time when everything in Poland was chang-

ing. Now I would like to talk about the new situation. I am not talking about social problems, but I am talking about friends, and about people, and about their situation, and about my situation, too. I'm one of these people, and because of this, the situation in Poland is very important.

PD: Me, I am different. I'm quite far from the political and social situation in Poland. I don't feel like a participant of the society. Of course, I have to a little, it's not possible to not [be a part of it], but it's not the point of my interest. I'd rather show my own things, my own feelings. Then, later, I can see how the films which I made in that time are connected to the situation in Poland.

MC: Lycantrophy, for example....

PD: Yes, some people have told me that Lycantrophy is a very strong film against the Communist system. I was never conscious about it, but now I can say yes, maybe.

OA: I have two questions. I realize that it's my personal point of view, but would you agree when I point out that a good animation artist, for example, Caroline Leaf, Yuri Norstein, Norman McLaren or both of you, develop three things: his own technique, his own style, and his own way of storytelling?

JK: It is the film language that I am using that is important, because if you want to talk about everything, you must find the way to show your problems. Because of that, you must
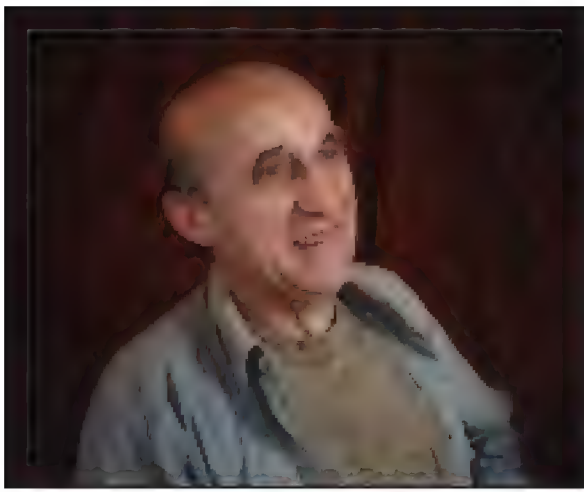
"The animation process is important because I can create everything." - Jerzy Kucia. Photo by Ron Diamond. © Animation World Network.

have your own language. Of course, this language could change. Maybe in my next film, my language will be different, but it was very important to find my own language. For me, technique is totally unimportant because I am telling my problems, maybe not stories, but problems, and technique only helps me.

OA: But your technique is quite unique! I can recognize Jerzy Kucia's way of telling stories, and it is very different from Piotr Dumala's way, or Caroline Leaf's...

JK: Yes, yes, I agree with you, but language and the visual side must be recognized. Most important is how I can find a very simple way to show this problem. I am always looking for an easy technique, but always it is very difficult. Language for me is most important, to look for this contact with others. For me a reel of film is not only film, it is this interaction with the inside of the audience.

PD: Each of us finds our own language. I feel lucky that I found it. I feel it is a part of myself, this language I use. I like to work, because I like these tools. I like this style. This is important, of course... I am very

close to such things like religion, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, etc., so my language is very close to these things. It's close to the language of dreams, and of symbols, and universal things. This is the most important problem. In this way, I am not so close to the [social and political] situation [in Poland] because I don't want to make any references to the situation. If it is there, it is not because I want it, but it happened. I am just like an instrument, just playing what I want to play, and then I am surprised by what I see. Of course, it is not so much completely improvisation, but a big part of it is. This language I like is a very deep language of symbols, of things from dreams. I think Jerzy is similar, but in a different way. His is also a language of symbols.

MC: I think you are similar in that you both deal with dream and reality. You both use your films as a vehicle to express your dreams, as well as your realities.

"But now, in this time of bigger freedom and when people have different aims, like money, like making their life better than before, where is the place for art, for culture?" - Piotr Dumala

PD: I agree.

OA: Thomas Basgier once said that 'animation is the link between dream and reality.' Do you agree?

JK: Yes, and it even depends on the experience of the audience. But that

is a good way to say it, yes.

OA: I have a special question for you, Jerzy, because you try to take your work out of the usual distribution system. It's very difficult to get a film on video from Jerzy Kucia. I'm sure people offer to distribute your films, but it's very difficult to get a video copy. It is also difficult to get your prints. Can you tell me, is it a kind of artistic policy to make the viewings of your work very rare? Is it a kind of strategic move?

MC: I've heard you say that it should be like a holiday to see your films...

JK: Yes, because it is impossible to see my films every morning , it is not a good way.

PD: (Laughing) Only every week...

JK: (Laughs) It is better every night! (All laugh) But people must want to see them, and I would like to make films that people want to see several times, not once only. On several occasions, but not every morning.

OA: You're doing an interview for Animation World Network, so that's a new media, the Internet. What is your relationship with this new media? You're both still working with this - how would you call it? - "old technique," with this material, film; you can feel it, you can scratch on it, it has this material feeling. How about this new virtual media? What is your relation to this new explosion?

JK: I think it is very interesting. I would like to make [films for the Internet]. Not today, but in the future, I must be ready to do it. I've even started because I've made a short film for the Internet [for the

Absolut Panushka Online Animation Festival] but I would like to make films for the Internet. It must be different than I've made before.

PD: I agree with Jerzy, that it must be something different if I do this in the future. [The film] should be completely different than what I do now. Of course, I think also about something which could work together, [like] laser disc [CD-ROM] could be just as good a place to create instead of [using] film. But I'm not sure if I will keep doing films. So if I keep doing it, I will stay with film. It's traditional.

MC: Do you consider doing something else?

PD: I think sometimes when I do a drawing in my film, I want to keep it, but I must destroy it because this is the technique I use. I must destroy every frame to put in its place another one, the next one, to have movement. This way, sometimes I think it is too much suffering, to destroy all the time what I am doing. I would like to do some paintings, some graphic drawings, sculpture, writing.

MC: Is film not immortal enough?

PD: No, I don't mean that. I mean film, like Jerzy said, is a process. I love that it is a process. It is only a piece of time - when I work, and then when I see it. I am concentrated on movement in general, movement of personality, and everything. Maybe it is kind of a philosophical thing. When movement seems so strong, when I feel the movement so well in general, and [I will feel] a part of the movement, then maybe I will stop making film because I will *be* film. It is difficult to explain.

OA: Twenty years ago there were about maybe two or three festivals just for animation. Meanwhile, we have a growing number of festivals. What does it mean for you as artists? Is it a better situation now for the artists, or are you critical of this [phenomenon] that there are festivals in each country?

JK: It is not easy to answer, because

"I am just like an instrument, just playing what I want to play, and then I am surprised by what I see." - Piotr Dumala. Photo courtesy of and © Krzysztof Miller.

of course, for animation, I think it is good that there are a lot of different events. But I don't like [that] some of the festivals became markets, not a show of art. Mainly I am talking about the big festivals, and for me these festivals are not interesting. They are good for my job as a market, but there is a big difference between a market and a film festival. Animation is a very large art, and we have a lot of problems to show. We need more markets, but in *markets*, not in market-like film festivals.

PD: I feel the same, that there are two different tasks of the festival. Some festivals are good because of advertising, and to make people interested in selling films, buying films. But some festivals, like this one (Fantoche), are more for the artists themselves. They are good as inspiration, as a point of meeting other

people. So we need both of them, yes.

MC: What are some of the new obstacles that you face as an animator after the fall of Communism in Poland?

JK: Ah, it is not only my problem, it is a problem for every artist, every filmmaker probably in Poland. My problem was that I couldn't find my way to a new situation. First, I must tell you that I work from reality: from Polish situation, from Polish tradition, from traditional Polish art. The new situation change was interesting for me, but I couldn't find the answer to this very complicated situation. It is an emotional situation, it is about people who live in the same time as me. But it is difficult for me to find the moments I could show. It is difficult for me to answer in words, but I would like to answer in my next film *(laughs)*.

PD: Yes, as Jerzy said, it's an emotional situation. One problem is economical. How to make films, where to get money, etc. This may be a bigger problem not for us, but for students, for younger people who start. Another problem is mental, or emotional: do people still need art or not? Where is animation now? Because before, it was a kind of way to say that we don't agree, or that we have our own private world, or something like this. But now, in this time of bigger freedom and when people have different aims, like money, like making their life better than before, where is the place for art, for culture? This is not in balance now. So maybe this a bigger problem than money.

MC: You describe it as a problem in terms of audience, but is it a prob-

lem for you? You've already said that you don't make films for political reasons, but do you find that you have nothing now to push against?

PD: I've adapted quite well. I made many more films during the last five years than during the previous ten years. Now I'm doing at last, the film of my dreams which I've wanted to make since I graduated from school when I was 22.

MC: Which is....?

> **"Of course, to learn how to animate, how to shoot the film is very easy, but how to develop the art is the most important thing." - Jerzy Kucia**

PD: *Crime and Punishment.* So, I'm lucky with what happened. I'm still doing films, still doing what I want, but I think it's more difficult for young people.

MC: Jerzy, do you feel the same way?

JK: Yes, the time in Poland during the last few years has been very interesting. Everything was changing: mentality, economically, everything. It was very interesting to see this, but it really was very difficult to start production. With the young filmmakers, I spend a lot of time to help them because I'm a teacher, and we organized an International Workshop (The Krakow Animated Film Workshop). It was a very important problem, how to push young people, how to push their ideas. It was one generation who couldn't just start. But now I think they are better, some of them, not everyone, because they had to make this first step. I don't want to be a producer! But it was the best way to continue my work as an artist, so I do it. I learned how to be a producer, so now it's okay. But as I told you, for young people, it is not easy, but it is the future for them.

MC: That's true. You two have had to learn to adapt and survive, but you had something to fall back on, which was your previous career. Whereas, for new people coming in, it's almost as though they're starting from the same point where most young filmmakers are starting out. They have to face these obstacles the same way everyone else does. They have to find the money, struggle, etc...

PD: Yes, that's true. Before, it was obvious. When I started, I just came to the studio, and they had money, and they gave me money for my first, second and third film.

MC: Were you limited in any way, then, in terms of your expression, due to their sponsorship?

PD: No, not very much. Just if there were some personal things, but never with political issues. But I think that these young student filmmakers are different people than I was. So, I hope they will manage, because during their study, they learn how to be independent, and how to help themselves. They are probably better prepared to be filmmakers in this situation than I was.

JK: Their situation could even be better than ours was because they have more possibilities than we had.

PD: They go abroad. They see more films. They see more paintings. They can learn languages. We could, but with special pressure; we had to.

JK: I'd like to be young now, and to start now! *(Laughing)*

PD: Me too!

JK: I might not want to make the same films... *(All laugh)*

MC: Interesting! That's not the answer I expected. What is the primary advice that you offer [your students]?

JK: To try to recognize their film's personality. I would like to push their personality. It is my most important lesson because they must find their own way. Of course, to learn how to animate, how to shoot the film is very easy, but how to develop the art is the most important thing.

Visit the Animation World Network Vault to view the complete filmographies of Jerzy Kucia and Piotr Dumala.

Melissa Chimovitz is a freelance writer with a predilection towards run-on-sentences. Armed with a degree in photography from Rhode Island School of Design, a portfolio of handmade puppets, a short animated film (Eat'm Up: A Very Short Film About Love [1997]), and a determination to become a great animator, she will enter Cal Arts' Masters Program for Experimental Animation in September 1998. In the meantime, she lives happily in Brooklyn, New York, where she is participating in Janie Geiser's soon-to-be-named puppetry lab and working on a new film.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

How to Find a Job in Multimedia

by Pamela Kleibrink Thompson

Before I help you get a job in multimedia, let's first define what this monster is. Multimedia is the combination of more than one medium, such as text, graphics, sound, animation and video, in a digital format. Digital formats include game platforms, CD-ROMs, online systems (which include the web and Internet), interactive television and kiosks.

Content must be created for a wide variety of applications including reference, children's products (storybooks, learning and productivity products), games, location-based entertainment, virtual reality,* digital periodicals (such as *Animation World*), special interest including museums, erotica, music, performance, education, business, training, presentations, and marketing and sales. Every industry is affected by the technologies and techniques of multimedia including non-profits and government agencies.

Opportunities are everywhere for the artist wanting to work in the field of multimedia. The development of technology and increased memory in game platforms and CD-ROMs, as well as the explosion of the Internet, has created new opportunities for artists because the capacity for graphics is much larger. The Internet, a relatively new medium for artists, is a vast network of computers developed by military and educational institutions. The development of the graphic interfaces and web browsers has made the Internet much more popular among the general public.

You don't have to move to a major metropolitan area to find work. To find out more about multimedia in your area, contact your local library, universities, computer companies and design studios. Or look for a local chapter of the International Interactive Communications Society (IICS), other professional organizations such as SIGGRAPH or Women in Animation. (Phone numbers follow this article to help you)

Almost all game designs start with the basics: drawing on paper. This background design is for the interactive game, Oddworld:Abe's Oddysee. © Oddworld Inhabitants. All Rights Reserved.

How Do I Start?

One of the ways to get into multimedia is to develop your own web site and list it on your resume. First, however, be sure that you follow the five steps in web design which are: Planning, Designing, Building, Refining, and Evolving (make sure you keep it up to date, with your best work). You could also develop a multimedia title or an interactive portfolio on your own, but these may be more involved.

Another way to get in, is to develop multimedia products as part of your current job. Perhaps your company needs a web site or an interactive marketing piece?

A third way is to get a job at a multimedia company. Research the market, so you know what type of company you want to pursue and which company in particular. Working as an assistant or intern on a project can get your foot in the door and a credit on your resumé. Working as a digital artist at a nominal wage can give you the required experience you need for the next job.

Since there are so many directions to take in multimedia, you need to make a plan. Your plan should include identifying the type of work you are suited for, positioning and marketing yourself, finding opportunities, approaching companies, qualifying companies and accepting the job.

Identify Your Interests

There are many different jobs in multimedia; from animators to graphic designers to programmers to web site developers. Other jobs include game designers, interface designers and web masters. You need to figure out what you like to

do, and at what you are really good. Assess your skills. If you are interested in computer graphics, understand that there are many roles in this field including graphic design, icon design, web design, animation, lighting, modeling and texture mapping.

Multimedia is the combination of more than one medium, such as text, graphics, sound, animation and video, in a digital format.

What Do I Need To Get A Job In Multimedia?

You need to be versatile and adaptable. You will be working as a member of a team and strong communication skills are vital. In addition to strong traditional animation and life drawing skills, many video game companies look for artists with knowledge of software packages such as 3D Studio Max, Lightwave, Alias, Softimage or Photoshop. Web designers should know HTML, Photoshop and Illustrator. Remember though, the willingness and ability to learn are more important than familiarity with any particular software package.

Marketing Yourself

Positioning is the strategy a person uses to frame what others think about him or her. Marketing is the process of implementing that strategy. Position yourself so that potential employers are attracted and impressed. Narrow the focus of what you are looking for so the producer can figure out where you would fit. Your marketing tools include a resumé, portfolio and demo reel. The purpose of these tools is to get you an interview with someone who can hire you.

Resumé/Credit List

Be sure your resumé positions you for your next job. Concentrate on what you want to do, not merely what you've done. Emphasize the projects you have worked on and what your role was. If it is unclear about what position you are looking for, include that in an objective near the top. Be sure your name and phone number are easy to read. List the software programs you know.

Portfolio

For artists, a demo reel and portfolio are more important than a resumé. If you have worked on an interactive project and want to submit your portfolio in a digital media such as CD-ROM, call the company before you send it, to be sure they have the appropriate equipment to view it. Be sure to include a breakdown of how each piece was done and the constraints of production. Your best bet is to send a print portfolio or a VHS cassette. If you send a VHS cassette be sure it is labeled with your name and phone number, contains only your best work, shows variety, and is no longer than four minutes. Be sure to include a list of exactly what you did on each segment and put the very best segment first.

Business Cards

If you use these, be sure to include some information about your software knowledge as well as your name, street address, phone numbers (fax, pager) and email address.

Networking

Whenever you attend an industry conference, trade show, association meeting or software user group, make it a goal to meet at least five new people.

Networking is one way to market yourself for jobs that may never be advertised. Build on these relationships. (A listing of these networking sources follows this article.)

Finding Opportunities

People are making money on the Internet through developing web sites, online gaming or providing web access. If you want a job at a web site developer, study the market. Check out web sites you like. Contact the people who developed them. Read online job postings.

If you want to get into video games, go to the stores and study the boxes. Contact the game companies that make the kind of games you enjoy. Many companies post openings on their web sites. Other online sources for jobs could be bulletin boards, gopher servers or chat rooms. Trade resources such as Animation World Network's Career Connections, and magazines such as this one, as well as *Animation Magazine, The Hollywood Reporter* and *Daily Variety* are also good sources for want ads.

First, however, be sure that you follow the five steps in web design which are: Planning, Designing, Building, Refining, and Evolving...

Approaching Companies

Research a company and find out who has hiring influence or authority. A contact person is usually listed in job postings. Artists will want to contact the art director, creative director or art manager. Ask them what materials they would like to see and in what form. Follow their instructions closely and provide them with the materials as quickly and as professionally as pos-

sible. Include a resumé/credit list whenever you submit to anyone. If you must have your work returned, include a self-addressed stamped container. Before you apply to a company, you should be familiar with their products. Be prepared when your outstanding portfolio gets you an interview. Plus, remember, this is a two-way street. Make sure you find out enough about the company during the interview to decide if you really want to work there.

If you've determined that you need to learn new skills, choose a training program that provides hands-on experience and select a course based on the teaching ability of the instructor. Check out the equipment you will be working on and make sure there are enough computers so that everyone in the class will have their own machine.

Your plan should include identifying the type of work you are suited for, positioning and marketing yourself, finding opportunities, approaching companies, qualifying companies and accepting the job.

Qualifying Companies

If you are interested in a company, research their products or services. Find out what their reputation is. Look for people in responsible positions that you respect and ask them what they think. Try to determine the long-range prospects of the company by looking at their
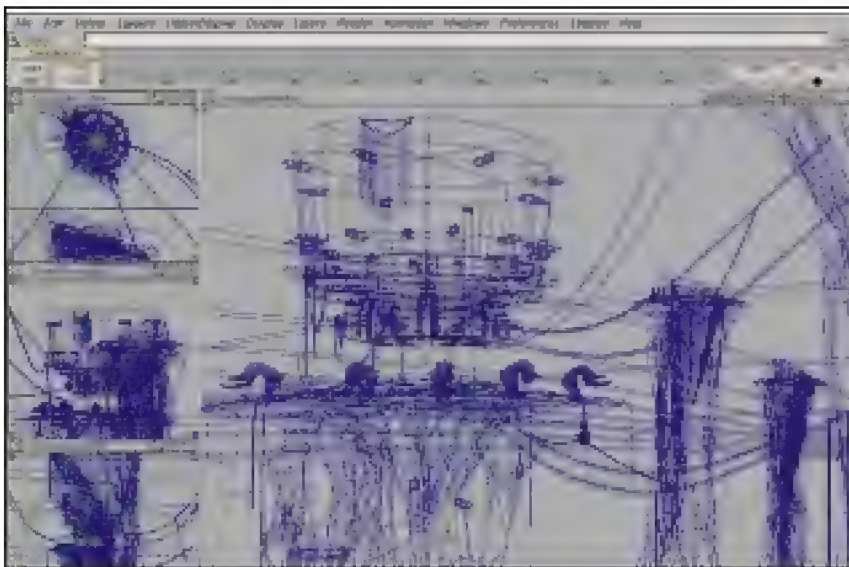
Drawings are translated into three dimensions in a computer. This wireframe model was created in Alias/Wavefront. © Oddworld Inhabitants. All Rights Reserved.

goals and target market. Look for a company that is growing. If it is a publicly traded company, check it out on the stock market report. Larger companies will have publicity materials. Study their press releases. Most importantly, look for opportunities to learn from exceptional people.

Accepting The Job

Before you accept the job, ask for an offer letter which should include a job description, your title, start date and salary information. It may also include term or duration of employment, performance bonuses of various kinds, medical, dental, and life insurance plans, vacation, royalties, credit offers, education allowance or reimbursement, retirement benefits, such as stock options, stock purchase plans, 401K, etc, relocation expenses, low or no-interest loans, period payment of company-related expenses of various kinds, luxury perks, contingency clauses (golden parachutes), severance conditions, and contract-termination conditions (for both employer and employee). An agent or independent recruiter can help you in negotiations before the offer

letter is drawn up. The difference between an agent and a recruiter? Agents are paid by the talent (you) and work to find you a job. Recruiters are paid by the company, which means they are working to find them the best talent for their needs.

What Impresses A Recruiter?

Be professional. Know your strengths. Be clear about your career objective. Be open and direct. If you are unwilling to relocate, make sure the recruiter knows this. If you send a resumé be sure to enclose a note with salary requirements, geographical requirements and any other pertinent data.

Be courteous. Be aware that the recruiter has a limited amount of time to spend on the phone, so keep your conversations brief and to the point. Any time you use to speak to the recruiter means that he or she doesn't have that time to call clients and find out about job openings. Use email or voice mail to communicate a full message to the recruiter so a call back isn't necessary. Recruiters hate playing phone tag.

Conclusion

What's ahead? A lot of hard work. You must be passionate about working in multimedia. If you are, why not pursue a career in it? Once you land your first job, work hard to be a productive member of the team, meet all deadlines, consistently produce top quality work, maintain a can-do attitude and keep records of your jobs to build your resumé and your career.

The finished product: one of more than 500 fully-rendered color backgrounds used in the game Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee. © Oddworld Inhabitants. All Rights Reserved.

Good luck out there in the exponentially expanding world of multimedia.

> **Be professional. Know your strengths. Be clear about your career objective.**

*Virtual reality, or VR, uses CAD (computer-aided design) and multimedia environment-building techniques with hardware to immerse the user in a digital environment and suspend disbelief. The hardware includes such peripheral devices as headmount displays or data gloves and tracking devices. The user "steps inside" the program and is represented in the environment with full motion up/down, right/left, forward and back direction in real-time. There is also the ability to pick up objects, move them and create the sensation of movement through a computer generated world.

Contacts:

- AIAS, Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences: (310) 441-2280.
- CGDA, Computer Game Developer's Association: (415) 321-CGD.
  The CGDA hosts the Computer Game Developer's Conference which will be held May 4-8, 1998. For more information call: (415) 905-2702.
- IDSA, the Interactive Digital Software Association which hosts E3, the Electronic Entertainment Expo: (202) 833-4372.
- IICS, International Interactive Communications Society: (503) 620-3604.
- ACM/SIGGRAPH, Association for Computer Machinery/Special Interest Group in Graphics: (212) 626-0605. Their next international conference will be July 19-24, 1998 in Orlando, Florida. For more information on the next convention, call: (312) 644-6610.
- Web Design And Development Conference, sponsored by Web Review: (415) 905-2414.
- Women In Animation: (818) 759-9596.

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson is an independent recruiter. Her past clients include Walt Disney Feature Animation, Fox Feature Animation, and Dream Quest Images and Engineering Animation Inc. and interactive companies such as Raven Software, Hollywood On Line, Activision, and Adrenalin Entertainment. Thompson is also a consultant to colleges and universities helping them design their animation training programs. As manager of art at Virgin Interactive Entertainment, she established the art department, recruiting, hiring and training 24 artists, many with no previous computer experience. Her animation production background includes features such as Bebe's Kids, *the Fox television series* The Simpsons, *and the original* Amazing Stories *episode of* Family Dog. *Thompson is a founding member of Women in Animation and active in ASIFA. Her articles on animation, business and management topics have appeared in over 40 periodicals including* Animation World Magazine *on the Internet. She is writing a book called* The Animation Job Hunter's Guide.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

CINANIMA: A Festival by the Sea and 'Home Town' to Hiroshima

by Sayoko Kinoshita

Held from November 11-16, in Espinho, Portugal, CINANIMA (Festival Internacional de Cinema de Animação) celebrated its 21st anniversary this year which was marked by a record number of high quality films participating in both screenings and competition. Among screenings, competitions and an exhibition of Portuguese works coupled with a debate hoping to foster Portuguese animation productions, CINANIMA also held four retrospectives. One program brought attention to the fight against racism while another was dedicated to Finland. Bob Godfrey (U.K.), honorary festival chair, was also honored, as was Sayoko Kinoshita's late husband, Renzo Kinoshita (Japan). Ms. Kinoshita relates for us the importance of this festival to her. A list of winners follows this article.

Whenever I attend CINANIMA, on the last day of the Festival, I always feel like I do not want to leave, and that I cannot wait to come back again in the near future. All of the Festival staff members have always been very kind and charming throughout the event's 21 year history. The people welcome us warmly. So, whenever I come back, I always feel glad and satisfied to be returning.

Our History with CINANIMA

Renzo and I first met António Gaio, the Festival Director, in the late '70s when he was still working at the city bank. We went to the

The Mermaid by Alexander Petrov, grand prize winner at Cinanima '97

bank, and were at a loss when the officer told us that regrettably they could not exchange Yen in Espinho. Then a smiling gentleman came to the counter, and while looking at the Japanese Yen bills with interest, said that he would privately exchange the money, keeping the Yen bills for his collection! It was Mr. Gaio. Later, we came to know each other more through his daughter who was working as a volunteer for the Festival. We were invited to his house for a delicious dinner and also admired the beautiful lacework art made by Mrs. Gaio. Another thing we were surprised to see was Mr. Gaio's comic book collection of the world. He showed us so many interesting Portuguese comic books that we even purchased some in

CINANIMA festival director António Gaio (left) speaks with festival guests. Photo by Thomas Basgier. ©Animation World Network.

Lisbon after the Festival. Since then, when we attend CINANIMA, it has become our pleasure to bring several Japanese comic books to Mr. Gaio as a small gift. Of course, by now, his daughter is married and has children of her own but I imagine that her house is nicely decorated with her mother's lacework.

From that time on, Renzo and I were not only making animation films but were also trying to create an international animation festival in Japan in order to better our field. Thus, our experience of participating in the heart-warming Festival, held in such a nice town like Espinho, greatly encouraged us to realize our dream. At that time, I never thought that Mr. Gaio would be the future Festival Director, and he too, I suppose, did not imagine that we were going to actualize the Hiroshima festival after many years of effort.

> **The auditorium is filled with their laughter and excited cries and I always feel as if I am sitting in the middle of a bull ring.**

CINANIMA's Inspiration

In the past, we always attended CINANIMA as filmmakers, taking our new film with us. Renzo passed away early this year, and I was very pleased when they kindly held a retrospective of our films during CINANIMA '97. In the program, I especially included *Geba Geba Show Time*, a comical animation

that is popular in Japan. I was happy to see the audience laughing, children and adults alike.

The Children's Program at CINANIMA always plays to an audience teeming with children. The auditorium is filled with their laughter and excited cries and I always feel as if I am sitting in the middle of a bull ring. I am sure that any filmmaker would find it rewarding to sit among them.

Whenever I attend CINANI-

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MA, I recall the innocent feeling I had when we realized the first Hiroshima Festival in 1985. I feel like recovering my pure heart and attitude. I believe it is because the organizers and staff members of CINANIMA really love the art of animation, and welcome the filmmakers warmly, with all their heart. In CINANIMA, all kinds of animation is appreciated in the same forum: animation for children, commercial work, experimental fine art animation, etc. All are loved by the audience.

I can say with confidence

> **The competition programs are full of the most recent works which I have never seen before.**

that CINANIMA is one of the ideal Festivals for me. The competition programs are full of the most recent works which I have never seen before. In town, many nice restaurants welcome us with delicious wine and foods. There, we can easily enjoy meeting with new friends. Espinho was one of the towns in which Renzo wanted to live. I hope

that I can make Hiroshima feel the same way for the animation people of the world.

Sayoko Kinoshita is director of the Hiroshima International Animation Festival in Japan.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

CINANIMA '97 Winners

GRAND PRIZE CINANIMA '97: The Mermaid by Alexander Petrov (Russia).
Jury comment: "The Jury decided to award this prize, unanimous, for the beauty of the film and the brilliant animation, but also for the career and work of the director."

CATEGORY A (less than 6 minutes): L'Homme aux Bras Ballants by Laurent Gorgiard (France).

CATEGORY B (between 6 and 13 minutes): Death and the Mother by Ruth Lingford (United Kingdom).

CATEGORY C (between 13 and 26 minutes): Famous Fred by Joanna Quinn (United Kingdom).

CATEGORY D (between 26 and 52 minutes) Honorable Mention: Flatworld by Daniel Greaves (United Kingdom).

CATEGORY E (Feature Film): The Blue Arrow by Enzo D'Alo (Italy).
Jury comment: "So that quality animation for children continues to be made."

CATEGORY F (Publicity and Institutional): Ottawa Signal Film by Marv Newland (Canada).

CATEGORY G (First Film): The Man in the
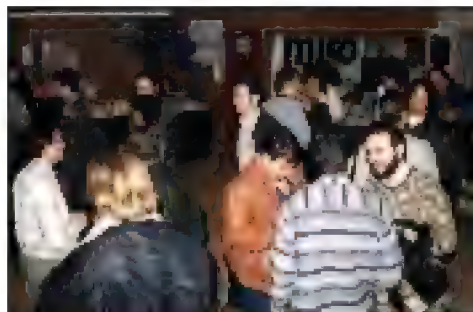
CINANIMA '97 guests gather in the lobby. Photo by Thomas Basgier. © Animation World Network.

CINANIMA '97 honorary festival chair, Bob Godfrey. Photo by Thomas Basgier. © Animation World Network.

Lower Left Hand Corner of the Photograph by Robert Morgan (United Kingdom).

Honorable Mentions:
Cheri viens voir by Claire Fouquet (France).
Dead End Town by Philippe Capart (Belgium).

CATEGORY H (Didactic and Information): Words by George Geertsen (Canada).

Honorable Mentions:
Gatofone by Pedro Serrazina (Portugal).
Talking about Sex: A Guide for Families by Candy Kugel/Vincent Cafarelli (United States).

CATEGORY I (Title Sequences for TV and Cinema): Love in a Bottle by Jane Hawes (Sweden).

CATEGORY J (Series) Gogs by Deiniol Morris/Michael Mort (United Kingdom).

PRIZE OF THE CITY OF ESPINHO - JURY'S SPECIAL AWARD
Jury comment: "For the quantity and excellent quality of the films presented in this edition, the Jury decided to award this prize to the Royal College of Art."

PRIZE MIO JO SABEL (Best European film - animation quality):
Deviant by Eoin Clarke (United Kingdom).
Spring by Silke Parzich (Germany).

PRIZE YOUNG PORTUGUESE DIRECTOR:
Transformations by Andre Marques (Portugal).

PRIZE ALVES COSTA (awarded by the journalists present at this festival): The Mermaid by Alexander Petrov (Russia).

PRIZE RTP (awarded by the Portuguese State TV Channel): La vieille dame et les pigeons by Sylvain Chomet (France).

PUBLIC PRIZE OF THE AUDIENCE: Flatworld by Daniel Greaves (United Kingdom).

The SAS Conference in Utrecht

by Gunnar Strøm

The Society for Animation Studies (SAS) held its 9th conference in Utrecht in the Netherlands from the October 8-12. This was the second time the conference was held in Europe and actually only the third time it has been arranged outside of the U.S. For the SAS to become truly international, the conference in Utrecht was a major step to include more European scholars. Hopefully, it will come back to Europe in two or three years time and maybe even institutions in Australia, Asia or Latin-America will be future SAS conference organizers.

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Utrecht was in many ways an ideal site for the conference. The beautiful city dates back to a Roman settlement in the year 48 A.D.. In the Middle Ages, Utrecht was a major Dutch city. With its canals, old impressive churches and beautiful small streets, a walk around the ancient town center is a really interesting and pleasant cultural experience. As an university town, Utrecht is the oldest in the Netherlands. Utrecht University is the largest in the country with 25,000 students. Both Utrecht University and Vrije Univeriteit Amsterdam were coordinators of the SAS event, but the principal SAS contact and the main organizers were Ton Crone and his colleagues at the Nederlands Institute for Animation Film. The aim of this national institute is to reinforce and broaden the infrastructure of animation films in the Netherlands. As such, they really demonstrated their qualifications and skills by holding a very well organized conference.

Opening Night

On the first night, the conference was opened in the beautiful aula (main hall) of the Utrecht University by Stevijn van Heusden, Head of the Arts Department in the Ministry for Education, Culture and Science. This leading Dutch cultural politician gave an informed and, it seemed, personally inspired speech about animation and the state of the art. Apart from the French Cultural Minister Jacques Lang, who spoke about animation in Annecy some years ago, I have never heard a politician on such a high level speak about our art form from such a personally involved viewpoint. Unfortunately, the follow up presentation that was probably meant to be a highlight of the conference, did not live up to its expectations. Professor Nadia Thalmann was introduced as the world expert on the development of computer animation. She took us through an "Overview of the State of the Art in Human Figure Modeling Animation." She showed examples of the work from her studio/laboratory in Geneva, but neither Marilyn Monroe or the other clips she showed particularly impressed me. A virtual tennis match between two players - one placed in Geneva, the other in Zürich - was a fascinating technical experiment of real-time motion cap-

tion control, but as animation, the performance was a disappointment. However, the reception afterwards was excellent! So was the conference dinner party, and the 't Hoogt Film Theater, where most meals were taken, was a great meeting place.

An International Retreat

More than 100 participants from 16 nations illustrates both the popularity and geographical variety among the animation scholars. There were participants from Australia, Canada, Iran, Israel, Japan, the U.S. and several European countries, including Russia and Ukraine. Even though I met several translators the first day of the festival, I never heard them work. The conference was open to papers presented in both French and German, but only Philippe Moins (Belgium) presented his paper in French, and all of us had written English translations for his presentation. The only French panelist, Pierre Floquet, chose to present his paper on Tex Avery in fluent English. I believe our SAS association has a very long way to go before it becomes bilingual. Maybe it never will, but I believe that if we want to attract our French speaking colleagues, it probably has to.

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U.S. Papers

The papers presented a broad spectrum of animation stud-

ies. The central subjects to be addressed were: "The Influence of the European Animated Film," and "Animation and New Media." Papers on other topics were accepted as usual. Also as usual, papers on American animation history were very present representing 10 out of 28 papers. Sybil DelGaudio (U.S.) presented "Animation and Anonymity: The Uncredited Work of John and Faith Hubley," and Maureen Furniss (U.S.) spoke about "Stars and Stripes: Animation in American Advertising," focusing on Leonard Glasser and the quite unknown American animation production company Stars and Stripes Forever Productions. Mark Langer (Canada) analyzed the Disney tele-film *Man in Space* (1955) and related it to the Cold War, the Swede Gunilla Muhr discussed "Modernist Traits in the Silly Symphonies" and Kevin Sandler (U.S.) looked in detail at "Looney Tunes and Merry Metonyms: Disneyfication, Identity Politics, and the Corporatizing of Bugs Bunny" where he compared the old Bugs Bunny films with *Space Jam.* As usual the U.K. SAS veterans Robin Allen and David Williams were among the highlights of the conference. This time Robin Allen presented his main argument about European artists influence on the Disney films through the animation art collection of Disney engineer and puppeteer Bob Jones. Through a new video lecture, David Williams presented "Sons of the Drawing Board: Laurel and Hardy as Cartoon Characters."

Animation Histories

Because of the European focus of the conference and the large presence of European scholars, different national animation cinemas were discussed. Philippe Moins' paper was on Belgian animation and its relationship to the strong comic strip tradition in Belgium. Mette Peters (The Netherlands) spoke about and showed the Dutch silhouette film *De Moord van Raamsdonk* (*Murder in Raamsdonk,* 1933-36), Boris Pavlov (Russia) presented Russian animation from the 1920s and '30s and I, Gunnar Strøm (Norway), discussed Norwegian cinema commercials from the 1930s made by European producers Desider Gross and Gaspar Color. Nikolai Izvolov (Russia) discussed "The Idea of Artificial Sound in Russian Animation," while Sergiy Trymbach (Ukraine) presented the animation of his country. All of us were concerned with animation history in our respective countries. A special mention goes to Marty McNamara (U.S.) who looked at "Patterns of Social Metaphor in New German Animation." Japanese anime was discussed in a Jungian perspective by Edward Gamarra (U.S.), while veteran John Lent (U.S.), and a young Turkish doctorate student Asli Tunc, took us through the history of Turkish animation, an experience new to all of us.

> To me perhaps the two most interesting approaches to the study of animated film were presented by Edwin Carels (Belgium) and Bernadette Kester (The Netherlands).

New Theoretical Angles

A more theoretical approach was taken by Anatoly Prokhorov (Russia) in his "Space as a Screen, Perception as an Illusion, Culture as Sorcery" and by Suzanne Buchan (Switzerland). She discussed the influence of James Joyce on modernist cinema and related that to Betty Boop and Felix the Cat, as well as to animated films by Cathy Joritz, Emile Cohl, Caroline Leaf, Giannluigi Toccafondo and the Brothers Quay. A quite unusual study for SAS conferences was Masao Yokota's empirical paper on "Face Preference of Animation Characters by Japanese University Students."

To me perhaps the two most interesting approaches to the study of animated film were presented by Edwin Carels (Belgium) and Bernadette Kester (The Netherlands). Priit Pärn's homage to 100 years of cinema, *1895* (Estonia, 1995), had been screened at the conference cinema on the conference's second day. In the morning the day after, Edwin Carels presented a very solid lecture called "1895: Animation, History and the Metafilm" where he discussed Priit Pärn's film in relation to Godard and other modernist filmmakers, and to new historiography in the tradition of Hayden White and Robert A. Rosenstone. In the same panel Bernadette Kester presented her newly started research on "Emancipating from Realism?: Historical Representation in Animation Film." Her starting point was an animated historical film from World War I, *On les aura!* Her summary states: "The fact that the filmmakers used animation instead of constructing realistic looking fakes, brought me to the question if perhaps animation films are aptly suited to grasp certain historical events which are beyond mere realistic representations. From this the idea naturally followed that animation film might be also an intellectual inspiring and stimulating medium for developing a critical view on the constructed images of the past." Bernadette Kester apologized to the audience for being new to animation and asked the audience for help to find relevant film titles for her further research. The audience was glad she asked. Obviously her research in this field is just begin-

ning, but I found her and Edwin Carels' historiographical approach to be a new way of thinking in the field of animation studies, and I suggest that for a coming SAS conference this should be one of the subjects asked for in the call for papers.

No Time to Talk

A problem with conferences like this, is that because the organizers want to include as many papers as possible, time for discussions and participation from the audience is too short. Our Russian-American colleague Michael Gurevitch tried several times to raise philosophical topics to be discussed by the audience and the panels, but long sessions and time shortages usually put an end to that. Some papers did evoke both emotions and reactions though. This time, Richard Leskosky discussed "The Quest for Depth: Mechanics and Aesthetics of the American Cartoon," and there were obviously different ideas in the audience on how the multiplane camera actually worked. The young Americans Chandra Mukerji and Tarleton Gillespie got the audience going after their paper on "Recognizable Ambiguity: Cartoon Imagery and American Childhood in *Animaniacs.*" Two other youngsters also provoked the audience. Dutch dramaturgs Arnoud Rijken and Bas Brinkman had, fresh from University, started their own animation dramaturgy consultant business offering to help filmmakers and other professional animation communicators to improve their scripts and focus their ideas. They presented quite a schematic method as background for the way they were working, and this obviously seemed too simple for the older scholars in the audience.

But the most provocative study was probably "It's About Time,"
presented by Dan McLaughlin (U.S.). With the help of a laser disc player and some statistical computer software, McLaughlin had coded and counted every shot in eight classic animation films. Among his results was the fact that the average length of the surveyed European film was 140 frames or 5.8 seconds while the length of the American films were 177 frames or 8.5 seconds. The professor was heavily attacked by the audience which claimed that his choice of films was not representative enough, the number of films was too small, etc. And how do you actually define a shot in an animated film? Not much came out of the discussion, but I believe that Dan McLaughlin got his point through: This kind of empirical study has no position in the field of animation studies today; this is not what modern scholars find interesting. But, I believe that on a bigger, more representative scale such material and empirical studies can give us basic knowledge for further research. Plus, Dan McLaughlin definitely managed to provoke us all.

> **The Utrecht conference managed in a most pleasant way to make us participants feel good, to inspire and provoke us, to give us the opportunity to meet old friends and introduce us to new colleagues.**

Plus, Film Screenings

Fortunately, the 9th SAS Conference did not forget the film screenings! As always William Moritz (U.S.) was an inspiring lecturer. His thoroughly illustrated presentation of "Absolute Film: The Next Generation" included abstract films from filmmakers like Bärbel Neubauer, Michael Scroggins, Sara
Petty and Robert Darroll. German film historian Jean Paul Goergen introduced a solid program of cartoons by the completely unknown filmmaker Paul Peroff. Peroff founded his own animation company Peroff Pictures Inc. in New York in 1927 and he worked both in the U.S. and in Germany until the early 1960's.

Unfortunately, I had to leave early on the last day of the conference. Therefore, I missed an exciting-looking film program from the Nederlands Film Museum and a Laterna Magica show at the Christiaan Huygens Theater. I'm sure this made a most successful end to an interesting and very well-organized event. The Utrecht conference managed in a most pleasant way to make us participants feel good, to inspire and provoke us, to give us the opportunity to meet old friends and introduce us to new colleagues. As an animation scholar from a small country, it is paradise to be able to discuss my subject with colleagues who have the same references and a similar background. I do hope I'll be able to attend again in California next year!

Visit the Society for Animation Studies web site in Animation World Network's Animation Village: http://www.awn.com/sas

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Sitges: Horror and Animation in Barcelona

by Bill Plympton

Day One I woke up as the plane descended over the beautiful Barcelona Harbor. After a 20-minute chauffeured ride south, along the Mediterranean Coast, I arrived at Sitges: a quaint, sun-drenched, white-stuccoed fishing village, which is now a European gay resort town. As I entered the Gran Sitges Hotel, headquarters for the film festival, I saw, basking by the pool, that great Canadian animator, Marv Newland. Being a judge, he said, only required two hours a day of his time, which explained why he was in such a tropical mind-set. After four hours of catch-up sleep, I joined Marv and his lovely companion Marci, for a tour of the tapas restaurants in town.

The Sitges Sci-fi and Fantasy Film Festival is 30 years-old. Although it's in Spain, the people of Sitges consider themselves to belong to a region called Catalunya, which has its own language and is quite independent. I attended the festival two years ago and met Robert Wise (*The Sound of Music, The Day the Earth Stood Still*), Ray Harryhausen and the Brothers Quay. Tonight's feature was *Lawn Dogs* by John Duigan (*Sirens, Flirting*): a nice, suburban, magic, Gothic story starring Christopher McDonald which will be released in a couple of months.

Day Two

My radio inexplicably began blaring at noon and woke me up. The hotel sent a repairman, but it was a beautiful day and I wanted to explore the harbor and beach. I met a number of filmmakers and actors for an excellent seafood lunch at the hotel restaurant. Then, I went swimming with a group from New Zealand and Australia and checked out the naked bodies. Spain has a much more lib-
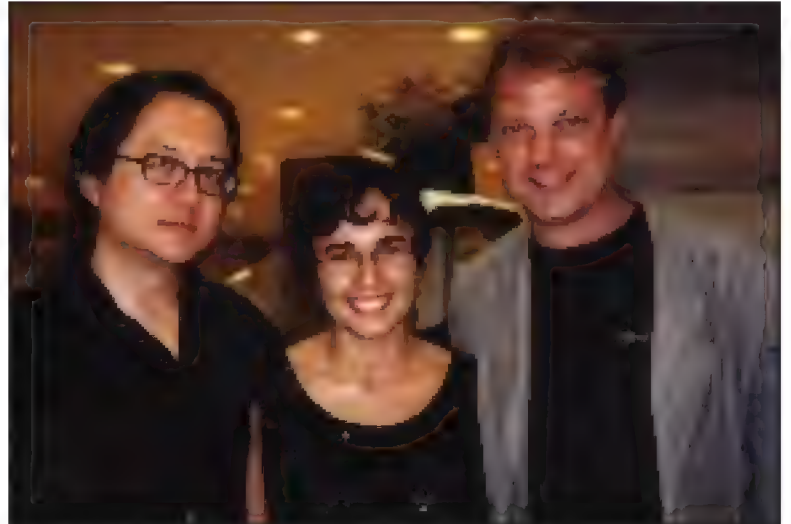
Left to right: Mark Dippe, director of the live-action feature Spawn; Carolina Lopez Cabrillo, animation supervisor for the Sitges festival; and Bill Plympton. Photo courtesy of and © Bill Plympton.

A still from Bill Plympton's live-action feature film, Guns on the Clackamas. © Bill Plympton.

erated concept of nudity than the U.S. Thank god!

Sitges has a wonderful animation section, organized by Angel Sala and Carolina Lopez Cabrillo.

Sitges has a wonderful animation section, organized by Angel Sala and Carolina Lopez Cabrillo. The evening's highlights were: *Coatimundi* by Great Britain's Danny Capozzi, which is a wonderful puppet animation about a boy and a dog, with a very surreal look; *Shock* by Zlatin Radev of Bulgaria, which features an excellent use of live-action and animation fused into a frantic love battle between 2-D and 3-D; *DNA,* a masterly pencil animation about evolution, by Giorgio Valentini of Italy who worked on many Bozzetto films; *Ferrailks* by

I Married a Strange Person. © Bill Plympton.

Laurent Pouvant of France, which depicts nuts, bolts and gears fighting off the intrusion of nature; and *Supernova Unleaded*, a film by Belgium's Manu Roig which uses great character design and superb colors in a 3D animated story of an interplanetary gas station.

Another animated film being screened was the excellent feature from Turner Feature Animation, *Cats Don't Dance* by Mark Dindal. I saw this witty film in the brief two days it appeared in theaters in the U.S. and was disappointed with the lack of publicity and commitment to its release.

I rushed to the Prado Theatre for the screening of my live-action comedy *Guns on the Clackamas*. It was a full house, I think due to my appearances on MTV. The crowd loved it and afterwards, I sold my videos and *Sleazy Cartoons* books. (Hey, I've got to finance my films somehow!)

I Married a Strange Person. © Bill Plympton.

Day Three

I had a two o' clock lunch with T y r o n Montgomery (*Quest*), another judge, and Piper Laurie (*Hustler, Carrie*). The pool area was mobbed with policia to guard Martin Sheen from his fans. Martin, who was there to present his film *Spawn*, joked and wrestled with the press. He's a real charmer. I stayed on the beach another three hours, then arrived at the Prado to introduce my animated feature *I Married a Strange Person*. The print had just arrived from the Hamburg Film Festival, where critics said, "It makes Beavis and Butt-head look like Hansel and Gretel." My second screening of the festival got another great reaction! Later, I met fans in a bar to sell my merchandise.

> **Sitges ranks as one of my favorite festivals, because it's a lot like Cannes (films, beaches and babes), but much more relaxed...**

The late show included *Flatworld*, a very nice multimedia film by Daniel Greaves, and the much-anticipated feature *Pacific Blue* by Sadayuki Murai, assisted by Katsuhiro Otamo. *Pacific Blue* looked nice, but it was all dialogue with very little visual magic.

Day Four

On my last day in Sitges, I spent six hours on the beach. Then we all gathered for the closing night ceremonies which were held in an elegant restaurant. All of the judges were revealed on a stage, drinking and eating. As each award was presented, the winner joined the diners on stage. The trophy was a wonderful two-foot statue of the female robot from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.

The award for the best animated short went to Giorgio Valentini for *DNA*. Then, we were all treated to Chris Penn in his fractured Spanish, introducing his new feature film *Liars*, which is a low-budget *Usual Suspects*. Afterwards, we assembled at the restaurant for a paella feast and drinks. Then downstairs we discoed to a Spanish band playing, "I Will Survive" (more U.S. cultural hegemony). I tried to talk to Chris Penn, but he was a bit drunk and quite surly.

Sitges ranks as one of my favorite festivals, because it's a lot like Cannes (films, beaches and babes), but much more relaxed, and with more emphasis on fantasy and animation; which is only natural in the land that produced Gaudi, Picasso, Dali, and Buñuel.

*Bill Plympton is an award-winning independent animator based in New York. His new feature film,* I Married A Strange Person, *is currently touring the festival circuit, and was shown most recently at the Sitges Festival. Bill Plympton's web site can be seen in AWN's Animation Village at http://www.awn.com/plymptoons*

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The 25th Annual
Annie Awards

Every year, the Hollywood animation industry gathers together for the Annie Awards, a professional awards show organized by ASIFA-Hollywood. Over the years, the Annies, as they are affectionately referred to, have grown in scope and ambition to include 20 competition categories for outstanding achievement, as well as the historical Winsor McCay and June Foray Awards.

The 1997 Annie Awards ceremony took place on Sunday, November 16 in the elegant Civic Auditorium in Pasadena, California. This, the 25th annual, was ASIFA-Hollywood's most organized, and punctual show to date. Starting at 2:00 p.m. with a champagne reception, guests had ample time to meet and greet on the patio outside the theater. The show itself, hosted by voice actor Gary Owens, was a well-
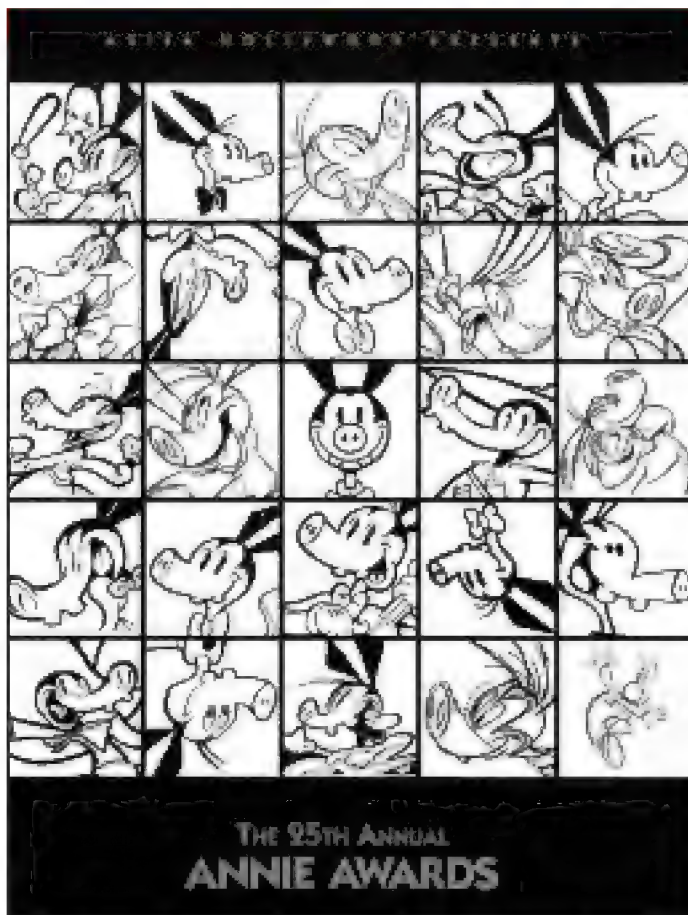
This year's program cover was designed by Will Ryan.

ASIFA-Hollywood president Antran Manoogian (right) and announcer Michael Mallory at the post-show reception.

produced two hours of Owens' witty remarks and character voices, nominee footage, acceptance speeches, and introductions by presenters such as Bill Kroyer, Nick Bosustow, June Foray and Jerry Beck.

There were even a few surprises, such as the announcement of Turner Feature Animation's *Cats Don't Dance* as the Animated Theatrical Feature winner. It is the first non-Disney winner since the category was added in 1994.

The film also won for its songs by Randy Newman in the category, Music in an Animated Feature/Home Video Production. But, in the end, Disney took home the most bronze zoetropes with a total of five awards between their Home Video and Feature Animation divisions. Following close behind was Film Roman with four awards for *The Simpsons*. Hanna-Barbera and Wild Brain each took home two awards, and Nickelodeon, Spumco, Warner Bros. Television Animation and Warner Bros. Feature Animation each took home one award.

Always looking to the future, ASIFA-Hollywood president Antran Manoogian hopes to see the Annies televised one day, much like the Clios or even The Oscars. He says, "It has always been the goal to get the Annie Awards on television, and, if all goes as planned, hopefully this will be the case for next year."

The 1997 Annie Award winners are:

Outstanding Achievement Awards:
• Animated Theatrical Feature:

Left to right: Sheila MacMullan (Warner Bros.), Sharon Bridgeman (HBO Animation), Annie Award winner Nora Johnson (Hanna-Barbera), and Alexandra Kube (Warner Bros.). Photo by Heather Kenyon. ©Animation World Network.

Cats Don't Dance (Turner Feature Animation).

- Animated Television Program: *The Simpsons* (Animation Production by Films Roman, A Gracie Film Production in association with Twentieth Century Fox Television).

- Animated Home Video Production: *Aladdin and the King of Thieves* (Disney).

- Animated Interactive Production: *Green Eggs and Ham* (Wild Brain).

- Animated Promotional Production: Coca Cola, *Super Mom* (Wild Brain)

- Animated Short Subject: Bjork, "I Miss You" music video (Spümco).

Outstanding Individual Achievement Awards:

- Character Animation: Nik Ranieri for Hades in *Hercules.*

- Directing in an Animated Feature Production: Ron Clements and John Musker for *Hercules.*

- Directing in an Animated Television Production: Mike B. Anderson for "Homer's Phobia," an episode of *The Simpsons.*

- Effects Animation: Mauro Maressa for *Hercules.*

- Music in an Animated Feature/Home Video Production: Randy Newman (songs) for *Cats Don't Dance.*

- Music in an Animated Television Production: Alf Clausen (underscore) for *The Simpsons.*

- Producing in an Animated Feature Production: Alice Dewey, Ron Clements and John Musker for *Hercules.*

- Producing in an Animated Television Production: Al Jean and Michael Reiss for "The Springfield Files," an episode of *The Simpsons.*

- Production Design in an Animated Television Production: Mitch Schauer, Executive Producer for "Born to Be Beavers," an episode of *Angry Beavers.*

- Storyboarding in an Animated Television Production: Nora Johnson for "Orthodontic Police," an episode of *Cow and Chicken.*

- Voice Acting by a Female Performer in an Animated Television Production: June Foray as Granny in *The Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries.*

- Voice Acting by a Male Performer in an Animated Television Production: Rob Paulsen as Pinky in *Steven Spielberg presents Pinky & The Brain.*

- Writing in an Animated Television Production: Jason Butler Rote and Paul Rudish for "The Beard to be Feared," an episode of *Dexter's Laboratory.*

- Technical Achievement in the Field of Animation: *Space Jam* (Warner Bros. Feature Animation).

Other Awards:

- June Foray Award: Phyllis Craig (posthumously).

- Winsor McCay Awards: Willis O'Brien, Myron Waldman and Paul Winchell.

Annie Award winner Mike B. Anderson (Film Roman), center, with Celia Mercer (UCLA Animation Workshop), left, and Animation World Magazine Editor-in-Chief, Heather Kenyon, right. Photo ©Animation World Network.

Un Jour:
A Woman's Metaphorical Narrative

a film review by Don Perro

"One day, a man entered my belly."

"The next day, since he was still there, I realized that I would have to get used to him."

Our Story

That is the subtitled English text that begins Marie Paccou's short film, *Un Jour*. There's nothing like grabbing your attention right at the start! As the camera trucks out, sure enough, there is a short little guy sticking out of the lady's stomach with his legs and feet protruding from her back. The woman does get used to her visitor, and so begins this film about their relationship.

The new arrangement requires some adjustments and the woman calmly cuts a couple of wide holes in her dress so the little fellow can poke his front and back ends out. At meal time, the two sip their soup from bowls on two separate tables, one above, one below. While in the bathtub, the little man (still attached to his host) wears a swim mask and breaths through a snorkel.

The co-existence of the couple is peaceful and even harmonious; tired from carrying the groceries home and half way up the spiral staircase, the woman stops for a breath. The little man gives her a hand by picking up the two bags for the rest of the climb to her apartment.

The relationship between the two is a silent one. No words are spoken, but as the woman begins to feel comfortable with the situation and to even count herself lucky, she discovers the man is no longer a part of her; he has

Un Jour. © 2001.

gone. A large round hole where the little man used to be is all that is left.

"One day, a man entered my belly."

Style and Technology

Un Jour is just over three and a half minutes of animation but seems shorter because it moves along so nicely. It is animated in stark black and white; there are no gray tones. The film has the look and feel of being made in the paint-on-glass style such as those of Wendy Tilby or Caroline Leaf. It is not paint on glass however, but computer assisted animation, making use of ToonBoom Technologies'

The protagonist's neighbor also has a man in her belly, a crass and ungrateful character. © 2001.

In the end, the woman is alone, with a hole in her belly where the man had been. © 2001.

Tic Tac Toon animation system.

Tic Tac Toon is a digital animation package developed for use with Silicon Graphics workstations. This package allows the animator to create animation by scanning in drawings or animating directly on a graphics tablet. The technology allows the filmmaker to create traditional looking films and indeed, Marie Paccou's *Un Jour* has a look which seems to have been inspired more by a woodcut than a computer.

The animation is well executed and descriptive; the drawing is strong and the high contrast design of the film effectively conveys a gloomy overtone. The transitions of the film add to the interesting way in which the story is told: the black material of a dress and later, the dark circle of an umbrella envelops the screen momentarily before it pulls back to reveal the next scene. The music is simple and slow.

It is animated in stark black and white; there are no gray tones.

The Metaphor

As with most films that are produced with great attention to design, *Un Jour* is an easy film to watch — there is a certain amount of humor regarding a little guy sticking out of someone's belly — but what does it mean? The situation is a metaphor, but for what? Perhaps a clue is given during the end credits when the woman informs us that later, other men entered her belly but were either too fat, too thin, too tall or too short. Is the hole representative of the void that remains when a relationship ends? Are boyfriends just "little men" trying to remain in the womb? About half way through the film we meet another woman across the hall who has a more boisterous womb-mate: that guy drinks too much and has a terrible temper. Our lady of the perpendicular man sees the couple and thinks that perhaps her relationship is not so bad. Is this a case of someone learning to live with her less-than-perfect partner?

The situation is a metaphor, but for what?

Moreover, the film has a sort of resignedness to it...a man comes, stays, then leaves. We wake up one day and, unexpectedly, someone enters our life. We cannot help but invite them in. We change to accommodate them and then, when they are gone, we are left with a void, wondering what we did the day before they came. The film chronicles this cycle in a matter-of-fact way, so simply that as we gaze through our character to the window that she is standing in front of, we cannot help but feel her sadness.

Don Perro is an animator and designer currently coordinating the Commercial Animation Program at Capilano College in North Vancouver, Canada. He has made one experimental film in his life: a frame by frame tour of his 1977 KZ 650 motorcycle using a macro lens, one inch from the bike. It was never shown to anyone.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an email to editor@awn.com.

only for quicktimew-online version

The Encyclopedia Simpsonica

book review by Joe Toledo

Been dying for a tell-all comprehensive look at *The Simpsons*? Well, your prayers have been answered with *The Simpsons: A Complete Guide to Our Favorite Family*.

I've been watching *The Simpsons* since it premiered on Fox back in 1989. I used to watch them on *The Tracey Ullman Show*. I watched the Christmas Special when it premiered. Heck, I even watch the reruns in syndication and I've bought the videotapes. The way I saw it, I knew everything there was to know about *The Simpsons*. That was until *The Simpsons: A Complete Guide to Our Favorite Family* was published.

Published by HarperPerrenial, *The Simpsons: A Complete Guide to Our Favorite Family* provides more *Simpsons* information than you can shake an inanimate carbon rod at. With synopses, secret plot elements, and character bios, *The Simpsons Guide* contains nearly everything you need to know about Springfield, USA. I know I spent hours browsing it and laughing out loud over all the great moments from episodes past, before realizing that I still had to write this review.

Episode By Episode

In layman's terms, *The Simpsons Guide* is a compendium, a collection of synopses from all the episodes of *The Simpsons*. In fact, each episode receives its own page, but the book ends up being so much more. In his introduction to the book, Matt Groening refers to
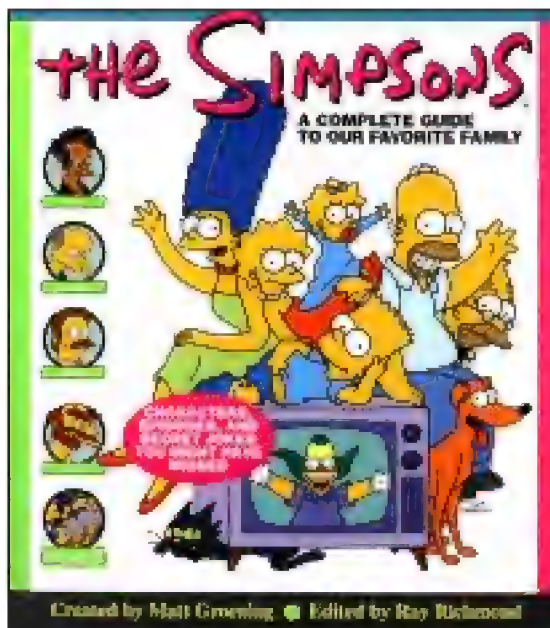
the compendium as the *Encyclopedia Simpsonica*, and he isn't too far off the mark.

> **I applaud Groening and Ray Richmond for putting together a Simpsons book actually worthy of being published.**

For every episode, there is a brief, three-paragraph plot description. Thank the maker they are brief. We all know what the episodes are about. (Don't lie, you know you

know.) Then we get into the meat of the information. For those of us who want to know every detail about each episode, about 70 percent of every page is dedicated to information not readily available: the best quotes from characters, details you never noticed before, and things you would never observe such as inside jokes and other production information. For example, ever wonder why Michael Jackson was never credited for performing the voice of Leon Kompowsky? It's in the book! You can find Bart's chalkboard quotes, lyrics to songs, and cool images from the episodes.

An episode's primary guest character is introduced in a sidebar with a short bio. They cover everyone from Mindy Simmons to the Bumblebee Man to Mr. Sparkle. In addition to the character info, the bio provides production notes. For example, every character has the celebrity name who provided the guest voice for him/her.

Tell Me Something I Don't Know

Even if you aren't interested in information about the episodes, the book provides even more *Simpsons* knowledge. Ever wanted a list of all the times Homer has said "D'oh!" or "Mmmm?" Have you ever needed a list of all the couch gags the Simpsons performed during the

opening credits? Or did you ever want to know who voices your favorite characters? All that information is in there on special insert pages. Several lists compile all the facts and figures that couldn't fit into episode synopses, including the never before published "Itchy and Scratchy" filmography.

> **Previous attempts at Simpsons books were often polluted by half-hearted attempts to recreate the humor and magic of the television show.**

The book is built perfectly for browsing. You can just breeze through page by page. If something catches your eye, you stop, take a look, then keep on rolling. You don't have to worry about reading it straight through. It's a reference book. Plus, if you're just inter-ested in finding facts about a particular episode, a rather detailed index is provided in back to point you in the right direction.

What'd I Think?

Judging from the number of Internet web sites dedicated to *Simpsons* information, a quality compendium is something fans have been wanting for a long time. I applaud Groening and Ray Richmond for putting together a *Simpsons* book actually worthy of being published.

Previous attempts at *Simpsons* books were often polluted by half-hearted attempts to recreate the humor and magic of the television show. Well, *The Simpsons* isn't a book. It is a television show and it's about time Matt Groening and the rest of the folks at *The Simpsons* realized this. *The Simpsons Guide* doesn't try to recreate the magic. It captures it by letting you relive all the great moments from the show that you've forgotten and all the subtle ones you missed. In addition, with the insertion of episode production notes, it gives us die-hard fans a little insight into how the show is made.

> **If you love The Simpsons, you are really going to enjoy the book.**

The Simpsons: A Complete Guide to Our Favorite Family is a celebration of the show and the years of enjoyment it has brought me as well as fans worldwide. So pick yourself up a copy. Flip through it and relive some good laughs. Quiz your friends. Note all the things you've missed even after five viewings of your favorite episodes. If you love *The Simpsons*, you are really going to enjoy the book. Don't miss it.

Joe Toledo is a project manager for the Jamison/Gold Interactive Agency and was recently named Resident Simpsons Expert to the Animation World Staff. He spends his free time not unlike The Simpsons' Comic Book Guy, but at a lot fewer Dr. Who Marathons.

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Flight Simulators: A Bird's Eye View

by Daniel Rein

When considering animation in flight simulation games, Animation World Magazine wondered how the games compared to the real thing. As a result, the following software was evaluated by Daniel Rein, who is currently a Super 80 pilot flying domestic,

Flight Simulator '98. © Microsoft.

U.S. routes with American Airlines. He has been flying with American based in Dallas, Texas since 1990 and is a 1982 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy. He is currently a major in the Air Force reserves. He graduated from Air Force pilot training in 1983 and has flown in the service for a total of 13 years, eight years on active duty and five years with the Texas Air National Guard in San Antonio. During this time he has clocked up a number of hours in various different fighter aircraft. He has 800 flight hours in the F-16 A and C model Fighting Falcon, 600 hours in the F-15C Eagle and 155 hours in the F-5E Tiger II.

Before I evaluate some of the best individual software packages, I had some impressions on the software genre overall. After learning the basics of each game's flight, I spent about 20

The HUD in Flight Simulator '98. © Microsoft.

minutes flying each program and putting the various simulations through their paces. I played the basic games of each package and only considered flight characteristics and not how well it cycled through weapons systems or actually fired weapons.
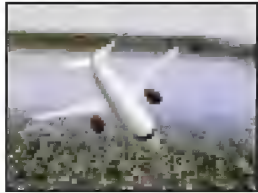
Use A Joy Stick

The best way to play all the games is with a joy stick. While you can fly all the systems using the keyboard directional arrows, it is impossible to get the real feel of flying by typing on a keyboard and watching the screen respond. The best way is to use a joy stick because for the programs which are excellent, you can really get a sense of flying an aircraft.

Not for the Faint-Hearted

Only serious game players who are interested in flying should buy these games. If you are looking for a product to plop into the CD-ROM and let the kids play for a few hours, these systems are not for you. In order to gain a working knowledge of each system, in-depth reading of instructions and memorization of the keyboard is required. This must be done in order to get the most out of the games. But those avid lovers of flight who are willing to donate 10-20 hours to reading, memorization and then practicing to become proficient will be rewarded with some great flying and a better understanding of flight. Obviously, the more a person knows about flying or has flown before, the quicker they will pick up

the games. The total novice needs to plan on spending some time though.

Some Cooperation Perhaps?

It would be nice if the industry could standardize its controls. For example, on several games, the space bar fires the weapon and F1 gives you a frontal view for flying. However, to increase thrust, each game uses a different key to increase and decrease speed. While I understand the companies com-
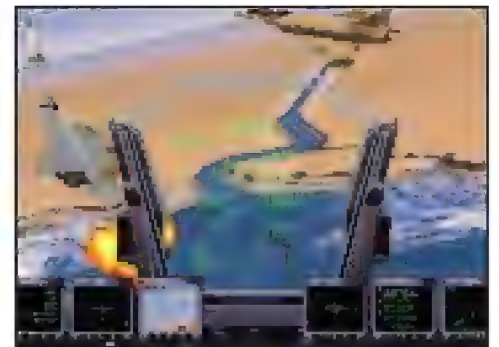
Jane's Fighter Anthology. © Electronic Arts.

pete against each other, there could be some industry standards established for the basic functions of flying aircraft.

> **The best way to play all the games is with a joy stick.**
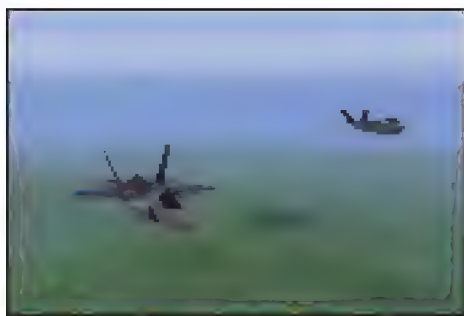
Review Of Products

I reviewed Microsoft's *Flight Simulator '98*; Jane's *Fighter Anthology*; Eidos Interactive's *Joint Strike Fighter* and Digital Image Design's *EF 2000*.

Microsoft's Flight Simulator '98

This is a very tough package to play off the keyboard, and the use of a joy stick is mandatory. The

Joint Strike Fighter. © Eidos Interactive.

reason is the number of cross checks (checking two gauges to make sure they are working correctly simultaneously) a person has to do while learning how to fly. The simulation is good, but the gauges on the dash board are small and hard to read. This would not be a big deal to a novice, but an experienced flyer would find it irritating and like bigger gauges. The system is also oversensitive to the joy stick and keyboard commands. When you pitch the aircraft up or down, there is no feel to the movement and it's hard to measure. It would help if you could set the yoke (the "steering wheel"). A bigger help would be if you had a yoke pictured so that you could get feedback as you turned. Once a person gets used to the sensitivities and learns the gauges though, it flies pretty well.

Only serious game players who are interested in flying should buy these games.

Jane's Fighter Anthology

This is a very good flight simulation package. It has good simulation, a good heads up display (or HUD: in fighter planes key pieces of information are readily available in the HUD which is located in front of the pilot's face, versus scattered around gauges in the cockpit) and good reactions for its turn rate, airspeed, climb and descent. The best

aspect is you are able to set the stick for constant high G turns (quick turns). The graphics are great, and when flying with a joy stick, it does have the feel of truly flying. Ground targets and terrain were not the best viewed, but were adequate for targeting. The numerous different views you are able to see while flying really helps in letting the pilot know where he is in relationship to his surroundings. It also turns in increments which is more realistic to flying fighters. Again, it's not a game you can put in and start playing. Reading the in-depth instructions is needed before, and along

Digital Image Design's EF 2000. © Ocean of America.

with, memorizing the keyboard to get the most out of the game. Most pilots would enjoy flying this simulation package.

Eidos Interactive's Joint Strike Fighter

This is a pretty good package, but not as good as the *EF 2000* or Jane's *Anthology*. The graphics are not as crisp, but there are more ground features than you find in other software. The flying was realistic except there was a little buffeting and jittering when conducting turns, which don't exist in real flight. The turn rate also seemed to be a little slow compared to normal flight, but acceleration was fine. The best feature was the full screen HUD view which is the optimum for flying these games. All games

should have this feature. Also, the HUD was very realistic. This is a very good game which anyone would enjoy flying after taking the time to learn the instructions and memorizing the keyboard.

It would be nice if the industry could standardize its controls.

Digital Image Design EF 2000

This is the best software package of the four with a very realistic, basic HUD, great graphics and flying sound effects. There are also very realistic rates of turn, climb and acceleration. The software reacts like a fighter aircraft. It is not over sensitive and the different views out of your aircraft allow you to get a true sense of where you are in relationship to your surroundings. Everything about it feels like a fighter. Definitely not for those who aren't into flying because again, to learn the game will take a few hours of reading the instructions and memorizing the keyboard. For true aviation enthusiasts who want an authentic test of their abilities, this is the game for them.

Daniel Rein is currently a Super 80 pilot flying domestic, U.S. routes with American Airlines. He has 800 flight hours in the F-16 A and C model Fighting Falcon, 600 hours in the F-15C Eagle and 155 hours in the F-5E Tiger II. Daniel Rein is currently a Super 80 pilot flying domestic, U.S. routes with American Airlines. He has 800 flight hours in the F-16 A and C model Fighting Falcon, 600 hours in the F-15C Eagle and 155 hours in the F-5E Tiger II. Thanks to Major Mike Rein, who also contributed to this report.

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The Castle of Pastime: Kratochvile

by Edgar Dutka

Forty million tourists have visited the capitol of the Czech Republic, Prague, in the last year. However, only twenty thousand of these visitors know where the Castle of Pastime is and why it is worth the day trip from Prague to enjoy it. The Kratochvile Castle (the Czech name "kratochvile" means 'pastime') was built by the Italian master architect Baltasar Maggi in 1583. It is the most beautiful example of Renaissance architecture in all of Bohemia. The Castle, surrounded by three fortification walls and a water moat, was completed in six years, but the owner Vilem from the house of Rozemberk, soon died, and the Castle was inherited by his brother, the last of the family, Petr Vok. Petr was famous for his many mistresses but he was already old and sick and he sold the Castle in 1601. So on and so on the long, and rather uneventful, history goes. We, animation folks, are interested in the year 1976 when the permanent exhibition of Czech animated films was established at the Kratochvile Castle.

> **Just as American animated cartoons originated from newspaper comic strips, the Czechs have a long and deep tradition in puppet theater.**

Trnka, the Father

Czech animated film was a cultural phenomenon for nearly forty years. After the Second World
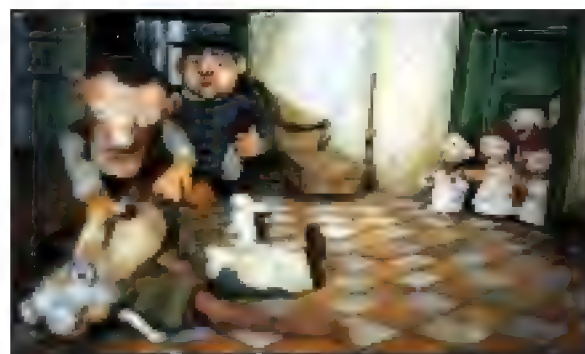

The Museum at night. Photo courtesy of and © the Kratochvile Animation Museum

War a little studio of animated film was established in Prague. A group of young animators asked Jiri Trnka to be their artistic boss. He was just a few years older but already famous for his children's book illustrations and scenography. He had no prior experience in film but they finished four animated films under Trnka's direction in one year's time. With the animated fairy tale *Zviratka a Petrovsti* (*Animals and Robbers*), Trnka won the International Cartoon Film Prize at the first international film festival in Cannes after the war. For the first time a Walt Disney film was defeated in the festival competition by an unknown director from an unknown studio. Young Bretislav Pojar, Jiri Brdecka, Vaclav Bedrich, Stanislav Latal, who have all become prestigious names in Czech animation, were Trnka's animators. While *Animals and Robbers* was not so different from Disney in animation technique,

stylistically, this film began what was to become characteristic of all Trnka films: a new and fresh artistic design, quite different from all others, lyricism, instead of gags, and beautiful music.

In 1947 the group was divided between a studio of cartoons and Trnka's studio of puppet film. Just as American animated cartoons originated from newspaper comic strips, the Czechs have a long and deep tradition in puppet theater. I can remember as a child attending many puppet theater performances with one meter tall marionettes. It wasn't until the mid-Fifties that television broadcasting began in Czechoslovakia. Trnka's puppet films were even more successful than his first cartoons and formed a long string of interna-


An installation of puppets from the Trnka studio, inside the Kratochvile Animation Museum. Photo courtesy of and ©Wendy Jackson.

tionally acclaimed achievements. His feats include feature puppet films *The Czech Year* and *The Ceasare's New Dress*, based on the Hans Christian Andersen tale, *The Novel* based on Chekhov, *The Song of the Prairie*, *The Good Soldier Sweik* and the fairy tale *Bajaja*. Two of his other landmark films are the amazing adaptation of Shakespeare's *Midsummer's Night Dream* and his last film *The Hand*, a strong metaphor about an artist's situation in a totalitarian society which, after his death in 1969, was banned from screening for twenty years.

Today's Talents

But Czech animated film is not only Trnka. Perhaps you remem-
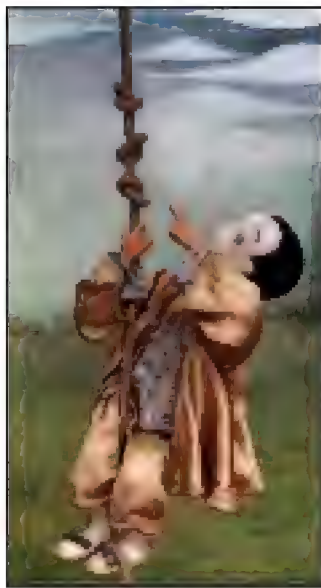
A puppet from Jiri Bocek's Three Etudes for an Animator. Photo courtesy of and © the Kratochvile Animation Museum.

ber Pojar's famous films *A Drop Too Much* or *The Lion and a Song*, the first winner at the festival in Annecy. There is also the Oscar winning American director Gene Deitch who came to Prague in the Fifties to marry a Czech producer and to teach Czech animators to be a little more dynamic in their animation drawing. I could mention a younger generation such as Jan Svankmajer, or even younger artists and directors, such as Jiri Barta and his amazing puppet films, or Michaela Pavlatova, an Oscar nominee for her film *Words, Words, Words* I also did not mention the Karel Zeman and Hermina Tyrlova films created at the former Bata's Studio in Zlin. Have you seen his adaptation of the Jules Verne novel *The Invention of Destruction* or *The Stolen Airship*? You can see entire scenes and sets, drawings, puppets and artistic designs from all of the films I have mentioned, plus much more, in the permanent Museum of Czech Animated Film in the Kratochvile Castle.

> **The Castle windows reveal the surrounding green meadows, ponds and oak woods.**

Something For Everyone

Who ought to visit the Castle? Children. The little ones look at the lovely little original scenes inhabited by puppets. The older children can learn how to animate a puppet or a traditional film. For film historians, it is a rich source of

information. But first, and foremost, this Castle, with its two floors of animation history, is interesting to people involved in animation, professionals. It is always useful to look back in order to see ahead better. For those who are blind and deaf to animation there is still the interior of a renaissance castle, with original ceiling frescos and marvelous views to enjoy. The Castle windows reveal the surrounding green meadows, ponds and oak woods. The Castle is open starting in April every Saturday and Sunday. From May until October the museum is open daily except on Mondays. A manager lives there through the winter.

> **It is always useful to look back in order to see ahead better.**

The Kratochvile Castle is situated by the little town of Netolice which is known for breeding race horses. It is one hundred kilometers south of Prague. Yes, it is in the region of the capitol of Southern Bohemia Ceske Budejovice or Budweiss in German. Why do I mention it? When you are tired of all that animation art and history, of Renaissance castles, of green meadows and muddy ponds, you can taste, or better drink down, a few pints of original Budweiser straight from Budweiss.

Edgar Dutka is a scriptwriter, animation historian and professor at The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

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Original production artwork from Jan Svankmajer's Et Cetera. Photo courtesy of and ©Wendy Jackson.

NEWS

by Wendy Jackson

Business

Nelvana Gets Wind in Their Sales. Toronto-based Nelvana Entertainment has signed a deal worth over $2 million, to acquire Minneapolis, Minnesota-based 3-D computer animation house, Windlight Studios. The two companies have been working together for several years, and Nelvana has already made a significant investment in Windlight, with a June 1995 purchase of an interest stake in the company in exchange for $350,000 of growth capital money. Earlier this month, Nelvana announced their new 3-D animation division, headed by supervising producer Pamela Slavin. They are already in production, with Windlight, on *Rolie Polie Olie,* an all CG series to air next year on The Disney Channel. "The 3-D business will become a major area of development for us over the next several years," said Patrick Loubert, co-CEO of Nelvana, "by acquiring Windlight and combining them with our own in-house talent, we will create a leading edge 3-D operation at the lowest cost and with minimum entry risk." Nelvana plans to invest over one million dollars in software and hardware, and to house the expansion by adding a new 10,000 square foot facility adjacent to their existing Toronto studio. If all goes as planned with the closing of the deal, the new CGI studio should be fully operational by early 1998. Over the next 6-18 months, several Windlight executives and artists will relocate to Toronto, while the remaining staff will stay at the

Rolie Polie Olie, a computer animated series produced by Nelvana. © Nelvana.

studio in Minneapolis and continue to service Windlight's commercial client base.

Film Roman Launching Into CGI. Film Roman, the North Hollywood-based company that produces *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill,* is launching a full scale computer animation division. David Niles White, most recently producer of Comedy Central's computer-created series, *South Park,* has been hired to start up the studio's computer animation efforts. Initially, White will produce several animated shorts that can be used as pitch vehicles for larger projects. Already on the development slate is a pilot called *Ed the Alien,* created by Film Roman's executive director of creative affairs and development, Guy Vasilovich. Through their existing development department, Film Roman will also look at outside computer animation project pitches. Film Roman president and CEO David Pritchard said, "Creating

a laboratory for new animation techniques enables Film Roman to tap into a new market. The time is right to augment what we do well by taking advantage of emerging technologies." Pritchard added that the new division will be able to utilize much of the existing equipment and staff already in place. "[We are] a traditional cel animation studio and we have no plans to move away from that successful part of our production."

Time For 11:55 Media. Three Swedish companies have teamed up to form Media 11:55, a new, joint company focused on producing interactive media as well as projects combining live-action and animation. The founding partners are Stockholm-based animation studio Filmteckarna F. Animation AB, Gothenberg-based computer animation and motion-control studio Motion FX, and freelance director Hanski Norgren. "The company will have a different approach to the interactive world," says Filmteckarna's Lars Ohlson, "we will use more classical film narrative techniques when working with CD-ROM and other interactive media."

Werner For Sale. Achterbahn, the German company which owns the rights to the animation property *Werner,* went public on the Berlin stock market last month Through this initial public offering, the company aims to raise over $11 million in funds for the cartoon star's next animated feature. Werner's first two animated features, animated by Hamburg-based Trickompany, have

Isabelle LeGrande

One of Headbone Interactive's original characters.
© Headbone Interactive.

done very well in Germany, out-selling Disney features at the domestic box office.

Headbone Moves Into TV. Seattle-based Headbone Interactive has announced the formation of a new digital animation division to focus on children's television animation development and production. The company's main claim to fame is their World Wide Web property, "The Headbone Zone," a kids' web site which is also a co-branded newspaper strip syndicated with more than 80 newspapers in North America. "We feel that television is a promising means of exploiting the franchise we've built," said Headbone Founder and President Susan Lammers, "we hope to follow a growth path similar to properties such as *The Simpsons.*" Lammers and her team are currently pitching Headbone characters "Iz," "Auggie," and "Elroy" to various studios and networks.

For background information on Headbone Interactive, see "Listen Up, It's Playtime," an article about Headbone in the September 1996 issue of *Animation World Magazine.* http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.6/articles/shane1.6.html

SGI Sizes Down. Silicon Graphics Inc., maker of high-end computer graphics hardware and software, announced that it will implement a dramatic restructuring program in December. This dramatic move will include a reduction in work force that is expected to eliminate 700 to 1,000 Silicon Graphics jobs worldwide, including contractors. The company says the restructuring moves will enable it to operate more efficiently and profitably, while increasing investment in next-generation research and development. Silicon Graphics expects the restructuring to reduce operating expenses in the future, but admits that the costs of the restructuring will incur a loss of approximately $50 million for the company. Coinciding with the restructuring is the resignation of two top executives in the company: CEO Ed McCracken and Gary L. Lauer who was executive vice president of Worldwide Field Operations and president of the company's World Trade Corporation. Robert Ewald, executive vice president of Computer Systems, will serve as acting chief operating officer during this transition period for SGI.

People

Hollywood Shuffle.
Nickelodeon has promoted **Albie Hecht** to president of film and TV entertainment. He is replacing Debby Beece, who is leaving her post as president of Nickelodeon Movies but will continue to work with Nick as an independent producer. Hecht was most recently senior vice president of worldwide production and development.

Included in his new slate of responsibilities will be the oversight of the new Nickelodeon animation studio being built in Burbank, and development of theatrical feature films such as *The Rugrats Movie,* which is now in production and slated for a November 1998 release. . . . The international children's entertainment and marketing company **Bohbot Entertainment** has appointed **William Stauffer** to the position of chief financial officer (CFO). In this role, he will head efforts to strengthen the company's presence in the financial community. Stauffer was previously vice president and CFO of Proginet Corporation. . . . **Laura Harkcom** has been promoted to director of creative affairs at Warner Bros. Feature Animation. She has been a

Rob Sorcher. Photo © Cartoon Network.

creative executive with the company, working on the development of such films as "Quest for Camelot" and "Iron Giant". . . . **Rob Sorcher,** formerly senior vice president and general manager of **Cartoon Network U.S**., has been promoted to executive vice president of the company. In the new role, Sorcher will oversee day to day operations for the Atlanta-based cable network,

and will report to Betty Cohen, president of Cartoon Network Worldwide. . . . **Robyn Miller** has been promoted to Senior Vice President of Worldwide Marketing at Buena Vista Home Video. . . . **Liddane Sanders**, formerly of Hanna-Barbera, has been named vice president of international finance for MGM's TV Finance & Administration department. . . . **David Plant,** former film commissioner for the Toronto Film and Television office, has joined **Silicon Graphics** as market development manager, Entertainment. In this newly created position, Plant will work with artists and organizations in the entertainment industry to develop technology solutions to their needs. . . . **The Ink Tank** has signed French designer **Laurent Cilluffo** as associate creative director. Laurent has already worked with the New York-based commercial production company on several projects.

Cronin Makes a Move. Rich Cronin, former president of Nick at Nite's TV Land, has been named President of Fox Kids Network (FKN) and their recently acquired cable subsidiary, The Family Channel. MTV Networks, Nick/TV Land's parent company, terminated Cronin's employment last week, since it was discovered he had made the agreement with Fox Kids while still under their contract. MTV Networks has also filed a lawsuit against FKN, (a joint venture between News Corp. and Saban Entertainment), requesting damages. Further restructuring is likely to take place at Fox in the coming months. The FKN chairman and CEO position that Cronin is moving in to was previously occupied by Margaret Loesch, who was assigned to the post of vice chairman in September, and is allegedly

moving out of Fox. Meanwhile, it seems Cronin will have plenty of time to move himself and his family to Los Angeles for the new Fox job, as a stipulation in his contract with Nick prevents him from working for a competitor before July 1998.

In Passing....

Voice Actor Don Messick Dies. Voice actor Donald Messick died last week, of natural causes, at the age of 71. In his 50 year career in the industry, Messick voiced characters for more than 100 cartoon series, as well as television and radio commercials. Some of his most famous voices include Scooby Doo, Bamm Bamm (*The Flintstones*), Papa Smurf (*The Smurfs*) and Muttley the snickering hound from *Dastardly and Muttley*. In 1988, Messick was honored by the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists Union (MPSC) for his contributions to the animation industry. Memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 2700 Garden Road, Monterey, CA, 98940 U.S.A.

Animation World Magazine welcomes letters in remembrance and appreciation of Messick's career in animation. Please write to editor@awn.com.

Fred Stuhr. Stop-motion animator Fred Stuhr died last month in a car accident. The 30 year-old, Los Angeles-based director was recognized for his grunge-inspired puppet animation music videos such as "Sober" and "Prison Sex" for the band Tool. His credits also include animation for music videos such as Boingo's "Insanity," Danzig's "Can't Speak" and Green Jello's "Three Little Pigs," as well as commercials for Converse sneakers, Halls cough

drops and Trident gum. In addition to several commercial projects, Stuhr was starting production on a new independent film called, *Motor Creeps*. The fan web site Animation Nerd's Paradise (ANP) has created an extensive tribute to Fred Stuhr, which includes images from his work and a condolences guest book. For more information, visit http://www.2cowherd.net/catseye/anp/stuhr-gallery.html

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Places

Bugs Bunny In Tokyo. Warner Bros. Studio Stores opened its flagship location in Tokyo on November 1. The new store occupies 17,000 square feet on three-floors of a nine-story building that Warner Bros. recently acquired in the prestigious Ginza shopping district of Tokyo. The store features a large animation art gallery and an entire Cartoon Network floor, with a computer station where "kids can pretend to paint an animation cel."

Films

Kroon's New Film in T.R.A.N.S.I.T. *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.,* a new short film from director Piet Kroon (*DaDa,*) premiered recently at the Netherlands Film Festival, and will be screened November 8 and 11 at the London Film Festival in the section "Best of British Animation." The 12-minute film was simultaneously created in the Netherlands, the U.K. and the U.S., with the contributions of animators Jeroen van Blaaderen, Valerie Carmona (*I Love You, My Cerise*), Michael Dudok de Wit (*The Monk and the Fish*), Nicolette van Gendt (*Daumier's Law*), Andrew Higgins (*Gourmand*), Keiko Masuda, An Vrombaut (*Little Wolf*) and Arjan Wilschut. The film depicts an animated mystery of a

fatal love affair, in seven episodes, each in a different style inspired by the 1920s Art Deco period. *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.* was funded by grants from The Dutch Film Fund, Channel 4 (U.K.), and The Arts Council of England National Lottery Film Scheme, and was co-produced by Iain Harvey and Cecile Wijne.

For more information and credits on the film, visit the *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.* web site on Animation World Network. http://www.awn.com/transit

For an inside look at the international production of *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.,* look up Piet Kroon's article, "Don't Quit Your Day Job, Work the Night Shift," in the February 1997 issue of *Animation World Magazine.* http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.11/articles/kroon1.11.html

Lion Director on Mouse Feature. And by "Mouse," we don't mean Disney. Columbia Pictures has begun pre-production on a combination animation and live-action feature film based on E.B. White's classic *Stuart Little* children's books. Rob Minkoff, who co-directed Disney's 1994 animated feature *The Lion King,* is slated to direct the film for Columbia. In addition, Doug Wick is attached as Producer, and Jeff Franklin and Steve Waterman will be Executive Producers. No release date has been set for the film, which tells the story of a mouse adopted by human parents.

Television

Nelvana Creates Kidz Klub. Toronto-based Nelvana Limited is teaming up with Chicago-based distributor MediaVentures International to package and distribute The

Piet Kroon's T.R.A.N.S.I.T. © 1997

Nelvana Kids Klub, a program block of Nelvana's animated series. The block will be made available to international broadcasters on the barter program distribution model which has become an established way of doing business in the U.S. TV syndication market. This barter system will offer Nelvana Kidz Klub to select international territories in blocks of 1-2 hours for daily broadcast, or a 3-4 hour weekend block, in exchange for advertising time rather than money. Nelvana co-CEO Michael Hirsch says that this will be an important new distribution channel for the company, which has 28 animated series to offer. "For many territories who are actively seeking quality kids programming but cannot make it work on a cash basis, MediaVentures' advertiser-support-

ed approach is the answer they've been looking for," said Hirsch.

Hola, Arthur! Cinar Films, the Montreal, Canada-based company which produces the animated series *Arthur* with WGBH Boston, has signed a deal with Mexican TV programmer Inglés Individual Network, to air the *Arthur* series as an English teaching aide for Mexican children. Also included in the deal is Cinar's educational puppet and live-action series, *Wimzie's House.* Both shows will be broadcast in English through MVS Multivision's pay TV service which includes Inglés Individual Network, a channel dedicated to teaching English. MVS Multivision will also air both series on their family cable network, ZAZ.

Wolfmill Pockets First WGA Deal. Wolfmill Entertainment, creators of the animated series *Pocket Dragon Adventures,* has signed a deal with Bohbot Entertainment for

The animated series, *Babar* is one of the offerings available in Nelvana's new Kids Klub international syndication package. © Nelvana.

52 episodes of the show. This is the first collective bargaining agreement negotiated by the Writer's Guild of America (WGA) specifically for animation writers, since the 1994 formation of The Animation Writer's Caucus, a division of WGA West,

Colossal's Frankenguy & the Professor for The Disney Channel. © Colossal Pictures.

California. Wolfmill also recently acquired the rights to develop *ElfQuest,* an independently published comic book, for animation projects.

which now boasts over 250 members. The agreement covers all writing services on the series and provides for minimum compensation, reuse fees, credits, grievance and arbitration, and pension and health fund contributions. "Animation writers have been struggling for this for a long time," said Craig Miller, who is a partner in Wolfmill Entertainment with Marv Wolfman. *Pocket Dragon Adventures* will debut in Fall 1998 through the syndicated program block, Bohbot Kids Network. The property is based on the artwork of Real Musgrave, and is being animated by DIC Entertainment in Burbank,

Dope Sheet Premieres On Ch. 4. Channel 4 in the U.K. premiered a new series in November, exploring the art of animation with interviews, profiles, and animated films. *Dope Sheet,* named after the animation timing device, is hosted by a digitally created character named Eric, described as a cross between Franz Kafka and Dean Martin. Each episode of the five part series will feature a different title sequence created by a young student director. The first episode, which premiered on November 7, includes interviews with Candy Guard, John Callahan and Alison De Vere, as well as an exploration of animation on the Internet, including a look at Spumco's new web cartoons, and yours truly, Animation World Network. The second episode

delves into "adult animation" with Corky Quackenbush and Bill Plympton, as well as British animators Stuart Hilton, Sarah Cox and Phil Mulloy. Each program is followed by a selection of films highlighted in the show.

Home Video

CPM Gives Us a "Private Psycho Lesson." What? The world of psychology meets ancient eroticism in Central Park Media's new release from the Anime 18 series, *Private Psycho Lesson,* released on video November 4. The subtitled, 74 minute Japanese film is available on video for $29.95. Also released in November are three action titles from CPM: *Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer: Round 2* for $19.95, *Black Jack-Clinical Chart 4* for $19.95 and *Machine Robo-Revenge of the Cronos, Volume 2* for $24.95

For an inside look at the Japanese home video market, including many titles which are imported into the U.S., be sure to visit anime expert Fred Patten's article in the November issue of *Animation World Magazine:* "The World's Biggest Animation Home Video Market?"
http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.8/2.8pages/2.8pattenhomevideo.html

Commercials

Spotlight

San Francisco-based **(Colossal) Pictures** created a series of eight one-minute interstitial cartoons called *Frankenguy and the Professor,* for the Disney Channel. Aimed at young kids, the shorts depict simple letters, symbols and shapes. Directed by George Evelyn, they combine live-action with 2-D animation created on a Macintosh,

Filmtekarna's campaign for Cartoon Network. © Cartoon Network.

in Colossal's trademark "Blendo" style. The spots will air between Disney Channel programs starting in mid-November. . . . .Stockholm, Sweden-based **F.Animation** created animated open and close sequences for Cartoon Network, illustrating the network's new catch-phrase, "the Cartoon Network thing to do." Directed by Jonas Odell, the spots utilize a dimensional cut-out technique that can best be described as '2 and 1/2 D' . . . . **Curious Pictures'** New York studio used stop-motion animation to create the illusion of time-lapse for a spot called *Choosing Sides*, advertising Reckitt & Colmans' cleaning product, Love My Carpet. Director Steve Oakes used half-scale models with internal armatures to bring two vacuum cleaners and a roomful of furniture to life . . . . **AMPnyc Animation** (pronounced "amp N.Y.C.") created a 2-D animated commercial for Primestar Satellite Television, promoting the broadcast service's new "Kids Remote Controls" product. The spot began airing November 3. AMPnyc is now starting production on its fourth *Science Fact!* spot for MTV's *Cartoon Sushi* special series . . . Boston-based **Viewpoint Studios** created a series of segment title animations for ESPN's *SportsCenter* show. The eight spots combine 3D computer animation with live-action . . . **Loconte Goldman Design** created a design and animation package for PBS' news/documentary series, *Frontline*. Directed by Daniel Paterna, the spots feature animated text, logos and graphic elements. Loconte Goldman also created a program titles package for Unapix Entertainment's live-action series *E.S.P.U.*, which will air on Discovery Network's Animal Planet cable channel. . . . . **Telezign** created a series of eight station ids

combining live-action with animated graphics and text, for the cable network HBO. . . . **Curious Pictures'** San Francisco studio created a 30-second commercial called *Theories* for Valley Health Care System, through Katsin/Loeb Advertising. The spot, directed by Denis Morella, uses cut-out and cel animation to depict scenes from Bay area cities serviced by the local health care provider . . . . Curious Pictures' New York studio created open and close animation for two live-action 30-second spots produced by N Ur Eye Films. Titled *Mall Madness* and *Dream Phone,* the spots advertise Milton Bradley games for girls. . . . **Atlantic Motion Pictures** created animation for a series of programming preview bumpers for The Movie Channel. Produced with Pomposello Productions, the spots feature computer animated 3-D balls emblazoned with The Movie Channel logo . . . . .

Music

Aeon Flux Tunes and Tones. Tone Casualties, the music label division of Klasky Csupo, released today a 2-CD compilation of music from the MTV animated series, *Aeon Flux.* The electronic music from the show was composed by Drew Neumann. The CD, titled *Eye Spy, Ears Only: Confidential* includes original cover art by series creator, Peter Chung, and is available in stores for $15.99.

Interactive & Internet

Blue's Humongous Clues. Woodinville, Washington-based children's software company,

Blue's Clues. © Nickelodeon.

Humongous Entertainment, has signed an exclusive, five-year worldwide deal with Nickelodeon to create CD-ROMs based on *Blue's Clues,* Nick Jr.'s preschool live-action/animation series. This is the first time that Humongous will be working on a property created by another company. However, it makes sense for the them to forge a working relationship with Nickelodeon, as they begin to develop their popular original game characters such as "Putt-Putt," "Freddi Fish" and "Pajama Sam" for television animation. "*Blue's Clues* required a worldwide software partner who shared our sensibilities and understanding of how preschoolers 'play to learn' –– the Nick. Jr. Philosophy," said Tom Ascheim, Nickelodeon's vice president of business development, publishing and multimedia, "Humongous Entertainment was the best choice because of their recognized experience and success with strong character development, high-quality animation and interactive design that empowers kids." The first of five *Blue's Clues* CD-ROMs is slated for a Fall 1998 release.

Technology

3D Studiomax R2, the latest upgrade of the widely-used 3-D computer animation software was released last week by Kinetix. The upgrade has more than 1,000 new features including enhanced NURBS

modeling, and several features for game designers such as baycentric morphing and the ability to assign interactive RGB data per vertex. More than 30 third-party plug-ins are available for 3D StudioMax, and this upgrade includes a Software Developer's Kit to ensure that more of such plug-ins will be developed by experienced users. 3D StudioMax R2 is available for Windows NT and DOS systems, priced at U.S. $3,495 for a new, single-user license, with upgrades from previous versions ranging from $795 to $3,000, depending upon which platform and version is being upgraded.

Events

Warner Digital Close-Out Sale. In a public auction last month in Burbank, California, Dove Brothers auctioneers are liquidating the entire contents of Warner Digital, the effects studio that closed for good in July. Millions of dollars worth of computers, film and video equipment, and office furniture from the one year-old studio were sold, including Silicon Graphics systems, motion control camera systems, 35mm cameras, Apple computers, an AVID Medi Composer and more. Appropriately, and perhaps sadly for some, the close-out took place at the former site of Warner Digital Studios, 1935 Buena Vista Street in Burbank.

Awards

Annie Awards. See our coverage of the ASIFA-Hollywood's 25th annual Annie Awards in this issue.

Liepzig. The 40th International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film took place October 28-November 2 in Leipzig, Germany. An international jury

Daniel Greaves' *Flatworld* won the audience prize at the International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film. ©Tandem Films.

selected three main winners in the animated films and videos category:

- The Golden Dove Award (cash prize DM6,000): *Roshdestwo* by Mikhail Aldashin (Russia).

- The Silver Dove Award (cash prize DM4,000): *Pink Doll* by Walentin Olschwang (Russia).

- Prize of Sparkasse Leipzig (cash prize DM3,000): *How Wings are Attached to the Backs of Angels* by Craig Welch (Canada).

- Mephisto 97, Audience Prize , decided by audience votes: *Flatworld* by Daniel Greaves (Great Britain)

- Honorary Mention: *The Mermaid* by Alexander Petrov (Russia).

Cable Ace Nominees and Winners. The nominees for the 19th Annual National CableACE Awards were announced in October, and the winners were announced in a non-televised ceremony on November 14.

In the Craft and International Categories, winners include one animated production. In the cate-

gory of Writing in a Children's Special or Series, *Rugrats* writers Jon Cooksey, Ali Marie Matheson, J. David Stern, Mark Palmer and David N. Weiss were recognized for their episode, "Mother's Day" (Nickelodeon).

Out of 84 categories, 3 included animated productions as nominees. The winners and nominees are:

- Children's Special or Series - 8 and Younger: The winner is HBO's *Mother Goose: A Rappin' and Rhymin' Special..*
Among the other animated nominees were Nickelodeon's *Blues Clues,* and Nickelodeon's *Little Bear.*

- Animated Programming Special or Series: The winner is Comedy Central's *South Park.*
Additional nominees included Comedy Central's *Dr. Katz: Professional Therapist,* Cartoon Network's *Johnny Bravo,* Nickelodeon's *Kablam!,* and Cartoon Network's *Steven Spielberg Presents Freakazoid!*

- Fictional Short-Form Programming Special or Series: The winner is Lifetime Women's Festival: *Undertaker,* a live-action special from Lifetime, but animated nominees for this category included Nickelodeon's *The Girl With Her Head Coming Off,* and Nickelodeon's *Short Films by Short People: The Adventures of Sam Digital in the 21st Century.*

Please note that some categories may also contain live-action nominees, which were not listed here.

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.

compiled by Wendy Jackson

On a Desert Island With. . . . Gaming Gurus

This month, we asked the creators of our favorite animated games to imagine what ten films they would want with them on a desert island. Coincidentally, three films were selected by more than one person: *Mad Monster Party* by Rankin/Bass, *Akira* by Katsuhiro Otamo, and *Fritz the Cat* by Ralph Bakshi.

Theresa Duncan is the creator of animated CD-ROM games for kids, including *Zero Zero*, *Smarty Pants* and *Chop Suey*. **Lorne Lanning** is the creator of *Oddworld Quintology*, a new series of animated 3-D role playing games. **Doug TenNapel** is founder of The Neverhood and creator of *Skullmonkeys,* a game for Sony PlayStation, coming in 1998.

Theresa Duncan's Favorite Films:
1. *Mad Monster Party* (Rankin/Bass).
2. *That Girl In Wonderland* (Rankin/Bass).
3. *Dreams of A Rarebit Fiend* by Winsor McCay.
4. *The Company of Wolves* by Neil Jordan.
5. *Fritz the Cat* by Ralph Bakshi.
6. *Betty Boop's Halloween Party* by Max Fleischer.
7. *James and the Giant Peach* by Tim Burton/Henry Selick.
8. *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* by Charles Shultz.
9. *Zero Zero* CD-ROM animated by Jeremy Blake.
10. *Alice* by Jan Svankmajer.

**Theresa Duncan and production partner, Jeremy Blake.**

Lorne Lanning's Picks:

"To truthfully answer these questions I must first consider our most basic human needs. The good news is that many of these needs can be substituted with a theatrical experience. I know this to be true because they taught me about it in art school. So, (drum roll please) here are the ten animated movies that I would want with me if I were Gilligan."

Oddworld's Lorne Lanning and his creation, Abe. © Oddworld Inhabitants.

1. *Xmas in South Park* by Trey Parker and Matt Stone. To give me hope... and get through my darkest moments.
2. *Fantasia* (Disney). I know everyone loves this film, and I know that it is one of the greatest animated movies of all time. But I would bring it along to help me get some sleep.
3. *Dumbo* (Disney). For when I thought about how lonely I was, at least there would be someone I could make fun of.
4. *Ghost in the Shell* by Mamoru Oshii. So that when I got really mad thinking about why my family left me on this island... I could watch someone else being hurt.
5. *They're Back!* (Amblimation) I've always loved the animation, but the story has been proven to have adverse affects on dysfunctional people. So this film would be for when I desperately needed a laxative.
6. *The Secret of Nimh* by Don Bluth. I always had a soft spot for rats as they continually gave me comfort through the low points in my childhood. (Please don't laugh. It's true.)
7. *Ninja Scrolls* by Yoshiaki Kawajiri. Because I would need at least one exercise video and my supernatural shadow crawl still needs a little work.
8. *All Dogs go to Heaven* (MGM). Because sometimes I would feel like biting someone too.
9. *Fritz the Cat* by Ralph Bakshi. To remind me that things could have been worse.
10. *Akira* by Katsuhiro Otamo. Because I would finally have the time to figure out the story.

Doug TenNapel's top ten:
1. *The Lion King* (Disney).
2. *The Wrong Trousers* by Nick Park.
3. *The Little Mermaid* (Disney).
4. *Aladdin* (Disney).
5. *The Thief and the Cobbler* by Richard Williams.
6. *Peter Pan* (Disney).
7. *Pinocchio* (Disney).
8. *Akira* by Katsuhiro Otamo.
9. *James and the Giant Peach* by Henry Selick.
10. *Mad Monster Party* (Rankin/Bass).
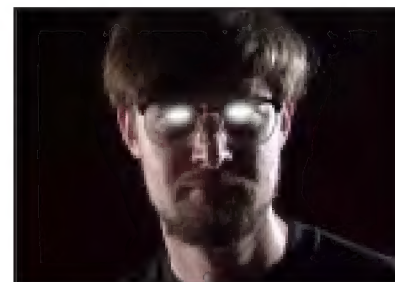
Doug TenNapel. Photo by Wendy Jackson.

The Dirty Birdy

The Dirdy Birdy by Dilly ©1997

Purdy, poor idealistic idiot. Heart full of romanticism, trusts in the fates to deliver him to paradise. But, sistah, this ain't no paradise.

Color by Mitch Joo ©

BUNGLE IN THE JUNGLE

By John Dilworth

Producing Results, January 1998

This issue aims to help our readers see their animated projects pitched, made, finished and distributed. It is a long, rough road indeed. Julie Pesusich will discuss how she and her partners began Liquid Light Studios while Jorge Ramirez-Suarez, who is currently working with Liquid Light on the Mexican Film Institute's first CGI production, will discuss his path to growing success. Nelvana's co-CEO Michael Hirsch will explain the workings of international co-productions while Dominic Schreiber will interview the pros to find out how they work the large animation markets. Attorney Charles Kramer will give us insight into the mysterious rules and regulations of developing projects based on existing properties. The history of distribution outlets will be explained by Karl Cohen and the California Summer School for the Arts will be profiled when John Roslyn interviews Christine Panushka.

Other articles will detail a writing for visual effects seminar, and Candy Kugel will take us back in time as she chronicles her directing experience in "The Creation of an Icon: MTV." Our Hidden Treasures column will profile Ton Crone's Nederlands Instituut voor Animatiefilm and The Student Corner will interview a number of prestigious graduates and professors who will discuss the virtues of making either an experimental or narrative senior thesis film. Event reviews will include the Cartoombria International Film Festival by Chiara Magri and John Parazette-Tillar will review The Digital Video Conference and Exposition which was held in Burbank, California.

Animation World Magazine 1998 Calendar

Producing Results	(January)
Motion Capture and Stop Motion	(February)
The Art of Pre-Production	(March)
Animation in Unexpected Places	(April)